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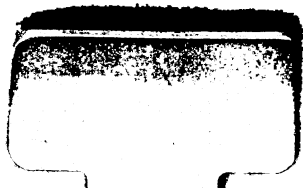
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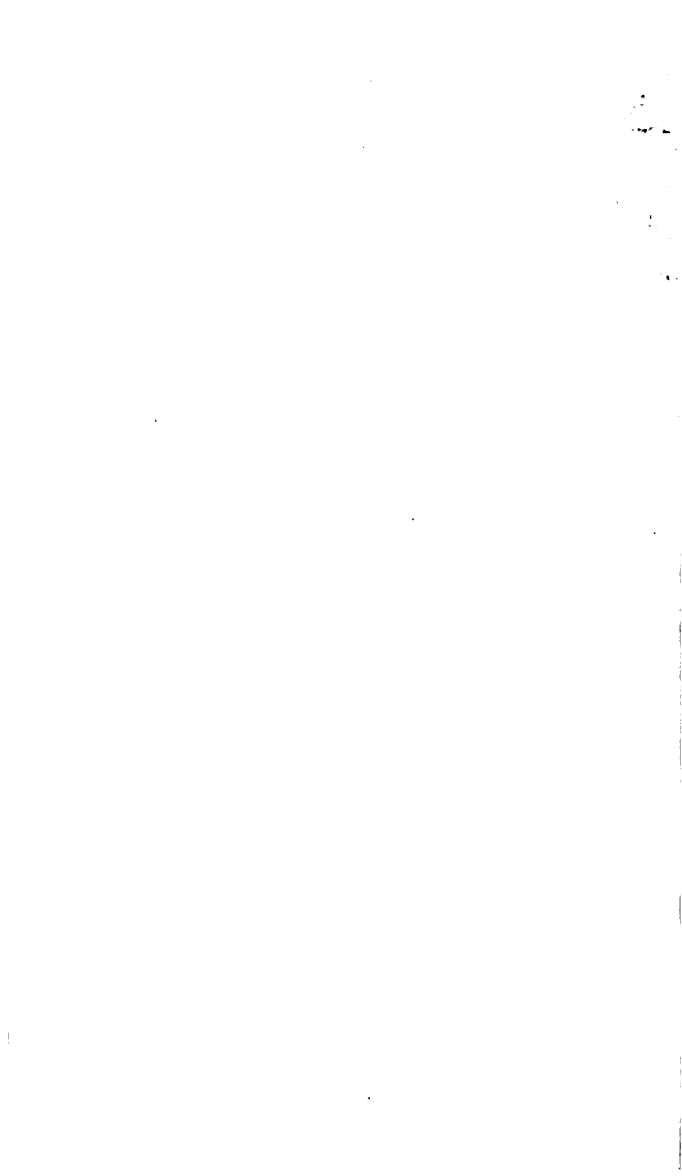
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THE
HARBINGERS
OF THE
REFORMATION;

OR
A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
WICKLIFFE, HUSS, AND JEROME.

BY THE AUTHOR OF
THE "HISTORY OF THE REFORMATION," &c.

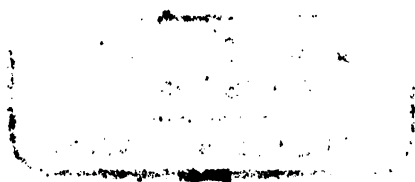
William Sime

"I send unto you Prophets—and some of them ye shall kill."
MATTHE. xxiii. 34.

BOSTON :
PERKINS & MARVIN, 114, WASHINGTON STREET.

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1829.

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PREFACE.

It has been justly observed, that the "rise," as well as progress of the Reformation from Popery, "must ever be regarded as presenting one of the most important and striking objects which has occurred in the revolutions of the human mind, and in the history of the world." Previous to that ever memorable era, when Zuinglius, Luther, Calvin, Knox, and others, were raised up by Divine Providence to be the honored instruments of delivering a great portion of Europe from the domination of Papal tyranny, there were not a few illustrious servants of Christ to be found, who nobly and successfully

“contended for the faith once delivered to the saints.” Among these, none were more eminent than **WICKLIFFE** in England, and **HUSS** and **JEROME** in Bohemia. Though the efforts of these three zealous champions for the truth were inadequate completely to dispel the moral darkness which then covered the Church, yet they served not only to announce, but to usher in, the dawn of the bright and glorious day of the Reformation.

The design of this little volume, is not to “lavish encomiums on the exploits of ambitious and bloody wide-wasting conquerors;” but to lay before the reader a plain narrative of the lives and actions of men, who, though “persecuted for righteousness sake,” were indefatigably diligent, zealous, and faithful, in diffusing the gospel of peace and salvation among an ignorant and idolatrous people. Neither was the effect of their labors con-

fined to the age or the countries in which they lived. Like the forerunner of the Messiah, they "prepared the way" for the coming of a period still more eventful, and were the "harbingers" of what may be justly denominated, the day of "deliverance for Zion," and the time when God's Israel should "possess their possessions."

In the History of the Reformation, already published, the writer of the following pages has stated a few particulars concerning Wickliffe, Huss, and Jerome; but he conceived that a more minute account of these persecuted saints, might not only be acceptable to his readers, but serve as an appropriate introduction to that work.

Whatever imperfections may be in these memoirs, it has been the aim at least of the writer, to give a faithful outline of the character and sentiments of the men concerning

whom they treat ; and he would only farther add, that it is his earnest wish, that they may prove the means of promoting that genuine piety, and making known more extensively those paramount principles, which were exhibited and maintained by these Reformers, and for adherence to which, two of them sealed their testimony with their blood.

Edinburgh, July 25, 1827.

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THE HARBINGERS

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THE REFORMATION.

CHAP. I.

JOHN WICKLIFFE.

SECT. I.

Introductory remarks—birth and education of Wickliffe—his first opposition to the Papal encroachments—he attacks the Mendicant Friars—publishes against them several able treatises—is advanced first to the Mastership of Baliol College, and then to that of Canterbury Hall—is ejected by Langham—the ejection confirmed by the Pope—Wickliffe is elected Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford.

ALTHOUGH the Christian religion was introduced into England at a very early period, and for several ages made rapid progress throughout the country, yet previous to the conclusion of the fourth century (A. D. 400) it had suffered a

grievous decline. The morals, both of the clergy and the laity, were at that period become so sadly corrupted, that Divine vengeance soon afterwards fell in a fearful manner upon the nation. In the fifth century, the ignorant and idolatrous Saxons,—who had been invited by the Britons from Germany, to assist them in repelling an invasion made by the Picts and Scots,—turning their arms against their allies, soon reduced the natives to entire subjection. In consequence of the wars which this revolution occasioned, the Christian religion was nearly extirpated from the island, and the greater part of its ministers put to the sword. By means of several missionaries from Rome, these Pagan conquerors were, it is true, subsequently converted to the faith of the Redeemer; but the monstrous corruptions of Popery, that had already infected the whole of Christendom, were at the same time palmed upon the English nation, which soon completed the degradation of the Church and the slavery of the people. The clergy by degrees engrossed the greater part both of the riches and power of the kingdom; and though the corruption of their doctrine and worship was too glaring to escape detection, and

though they had nothing by which to support them but the authority and traditions of the Church; these were sufficient to enthral the consciences of the ignorant and superstitious multitude, and to defeat the most resolute attempts of the princes who wished to overturn them.

Yet amidst this general declension from the purity of the gospel, there were not a few eminent men to be found in the darkest periods of Popery, whose genuine piety formed a striking contrast to the profligate and haughty priesthood around them. Among these were the venerable Bede in the eighth and ninth, and John Wickliffe in the fourteenth centuries, from whose unremit-
ted labors, incalculable benefit was derived by their countrymen, and the spirit of religion kept alive in many parts of the island. Wickliffe, especially, an outline of whose memoirs forms the subject of the present chapter, perceiving the enormous usurpations of the Papacy, in the spirit of a true reformer, dared to call in question the tyrannical domination of the clergy, and, striking a blow at the greater part of the abuses which abounded in the Church, roused the attention of

the people to examine into the principles of the Romish faith itself.

John Wickliffe, or John de Wiclif, was born at Spretswell, a village on the banks of the Tees, near Richmond, about the year 1324. We are not informed by historians of the rank or station of his parents, or where or how he received the rudiments of his education. All that can be learned concerning him is, that being designed by his parents for the Church, he was early sent to Queen's College, Oxford; but not enjoying those advantages for the study of divinity in that newly established institution which he expected, he soon removed to Merton College, at that time one of the most celebrated seminaries of learning in Europe, and the resort of the greatest and most learned men in the kingdom.* Here Wickliffe soon became distinguished for acuteness of understanding, intenseness of application, knowledge of philosophy and divinity, and superiority in scholastic disputation. The branches of study, indeed, at that period, were chiefly con-

*The following, among other eminent characters, were at this period the ornament and pride of Merton College:—Walter Burley, tutor to Edward III. who was distinguished by the name of the plain doctor. William Occham, called the singular doctor. Thomas Bradwardine, the profound doctor, and Chaucer, the father of English poetry.

finer to trifling and unprofitable philosophical discussions—a study to which Wickliffe applied himself with so much assiduity, that he is said to have committed to memory the most abstruse parts of the works of Aristotle. Being thus prepared to encounter the intricacies of scholastic divinity, he applied himself to this litigious kind of theology with such happy success, that he easily became a most subtle, and indeed an unrivalled disputant. To the usual branches of study, he added that of the civil and canon law, and also of the municipal laws of his own country.

The ardent desire of Wickliffe to attain knowledge, however, prompted him to aspire after further attainments than was common to the scholars of that period. For this purpose he directed his attention to the Sacred Volume, part of which he soon began publicly to expound, and privately to translate into his native tongue. His proficiency in the Scriptures raised his reputation so high among his contemporaries, that he was distinguished by the title of *Evangelic Doctor*, while at the same time it furnished him with that noble freedom of thought, which was afterwards so conspicuous in all his writings.

He also studied the writings of Augustine, Jerome, Ambrose, and Gregory, the four fathers of the Latin Church. "The fruitful soil of his natural parts," says Fuller, "he thus industriously improved by acquired learning; not only skilled in the fashionable arts of that age, and in that abstruse crabbed divinity, all whose fruit is thorns; but also well versed in the Scriptures, a rare accomplishment in these days. His public acts in the schools he kept with great approbation, though the *echo* of his popular applause sounded the alarum, to awaken the envy of his adversaries against him." The reputation of Wickliffe increased with his knowledge: He was not only respected as a distinguished scholar, but esteemed as an eminent Christian, for his exemplary piety, his ardent inquiry after truth, and his steady attachment to it when discovered.

In 1356 he is said to have written a tract entitled, "Of the Last Age of the Church," in which he exposed the many corrupt methods then employed for obtaining ecclesiastical benefices. It was not, however, till 1360, when he had arrived at the thirty-sixth year of his age, that he commenced that career of opposition to the papal encroachments, which has rendered his fame so

distinguished, and laid the foundation of that splendid fabric of reformation, which was afterwards erected on the ruins of the Romish Church.

The first avowal of what was then styled his new opinions, was his defence of the University of Oxford against the encroachment of the mendicant friars. The members of this religious order had, from a very early period of their establishment in Oxford, been involved in continual disputes with the Chancellor and scholars, in consequence of their unremitting endeavors to trespass upon the privileges of that seminary, and to establish an independent jurisdiction. Being confidential agents of the Pope, they also exacted, under various pretences, large sums of money throughout the kingdom; and, by deep-laid plans of hypocrisy, induced multitudes to enrich both the papacy and the monastic foundations. Among other immunities, the popes had allowed the monks the liberty of educating the youth, and the people in general. Availing themselves of this privilege, the friars embraced every opportunity, in opposition to the interests of the University, of enticing the younger students to desert the college, and take upon them the vows

of perpetual celibacy and poverty ; and so successful were their inveigling arts, that many parents, afraid of sending their children, as in former times, to the University, trained them up to occupations in life, which did not require the aid of a literary education.*

To remedy this evil, a statute was passed by the University, enacting that no youths should be received by the friars into their orders, till they had attained the age of eighteen years. Unintimidated, however, by the formidable enactments of the University, the monks still persevered in their opposition, and endeavored, with too much success, to foment feuds between the scholars and their superiors. Depending, at the same time, in a great measure upon what they procured by begging, these mendicants now began to propagate an opinion, that " Christ and his apostles were common beggars, wandering on the face of the earth, and without any visible means of subsistence." Wickliffe, who had long beheld with concern and contempt their shameful laziness, and insolent encroachments on the

* We are informed that, owing to this cause, the number of students, which formerly used to be about thirty thousand, was in the year 1357 reduced to about six thousand.

prerogatives of the University, immediately embraced this opportunity of opposing them. With this view he composed and published several spirited treatises. In one of these, entitled, "Of Clerks Possessions," he severely censured the friars, for drawing the youth of the University into their convents. "Freres drawn children from Christ's religion," says he, "into their private order, by hypocrisie, lesings, and steling. For they tellen that their order is more holy than any other; that they shullen have higher degree in the bliss of heaven than other men that been not therein; and seyn, that men of their order shullen never come to hell, but shullen dome other men with Christ at domesday." In another, entitled "Against Idle Beggary," he first pointed out the difference between the poverty of Christ and that of the friars, and the obligations which were laid on every Christian to labor in some way for the good of society; and then, with a severity of censure which they justly merited, he attacked these pests of society, stigmatising them as being an infamous and useless order, wallowing in luxury, and, instead of objects of charity, as being not only a reproach to religion, but a disgrace to humanity. "Christ,"

said he, "bad his apostles and disciples that they should not bere a sachell, or scrip; but look what man is able to hear the gospel, and eat and drink therein, and pass not thence, and not pass from house to house.—Sith there were poor men enough to taken mens alms before that freres camen in, and the earth is now more barren then it was, other (otherwise) freres, or poor men, moten wanten (might want) of this alms; but freres, by subtle hypocrisie gotten to themselves, and letten (hinder) the poor men to get these alms."

This last treatise made a powerful impression on the people, and greatly increased the reputation of Wickliffe. From this time the University considered him one of their ablest champions, and in testimony of their gratitude for his zealous defence of their privileges, elevated him, in the year 1361, to the dignity of Warden of Baliol College. The same year he was presented to the rectory of Fillingham, in the archdeaconry of Stowe and diocese of Lincoln, which he afterwards exchanged for that of Luggershall, in Wiltshire.

In 1365, Simon Islip, Archbishop of Canterbury, having founded a new college at Oxford,

which he denominated Canterbury Hall, in order to conciliate both the monks and the seculars, appointed Henry Wodehall warden, and three of the monks scholars of that institution. Wodehall, however, immediately involved himself in the disputes which still existed in Oxford; and not only introduced dissension into his own hall, but fomented animosities in the other colleges. The Archbishop, who saw with regret the design of his new institution frustrated, ejected Wodehall and the three monks in 1365, and solicited Wickliffe to accept the office of warden. Wickliffe acceded to this proposal, and was accordingly placed at the head of Canterbury Hall, being made warden on the 14th of December. In the letters of institution to his office, he is styled "a person in whose fidelity, circumspection, and industry, his Grace the Archbishop very much confided; and one on whom he had fixed his eyes for that place, on account of the honesty of his life, his laudable conversation, and knowledge of letters."

Wickliffe's enjoyment of this honor was, however, of short duration. On the death of Islip, in April 1366, Simon Langham, Bishop of Ely, was raised to the See of Canterbury. The new

Archbishop being a monk, those of that order who had been so lately expelled from Canterbury Hall immediately petitioned the new Archbishop to reinstate them in their former situations. Influenced by his partiality to the order to which he belonged, rather than considering how unjust and impolitic it was to set aside the very act of a founder, Langham expelled Wickliffe and his companions from the College. By the advice of his friends, Wickliffe appealed to the Pope, against a proceeding so injurious to the interest of universities in general. Although Urban, who at that time filled the Papal chair, was inclined to support the interests of the mendicants, yet, aware of the solid grounds on which Wickliffe's appeal was founded, he did not venture to come to an immediate decision ; but, for the appearance of justice, he commissioned Cardinal Andruynus to examine the merits of the case.

While the appeal was under deliberation, Urban revived a claim which had been imposed upon the nation by King John, of the annual payment of a thousand marks to the See of Rome, a tribute which had been withheld since the year 1333. In 1366, however, Urban informed Edward III., that if the accustomed homage was

not paid within a time prescribed, he should summon him to his court to answer for the default. Edward was determined to resist this ignominious vassalage, and assembled his parliament to obtain their advice. That assembly almost unanimously declared that John had violated his coronation oath, and given up the rights of the nation ; and advised the king by no means to listen to the Pope, assuring him of assistance, if necessary, to oppose his usurpation. The Pope, on the other hand, was not without advocates to defend his claim. Among others who enlisted in his cause, was a monk of superior talents and learning, who published a treatise in support of the Church, written in a manner so spirited and plausible, that it made a strong impression upon the minds of the people. To see a bad cause so ably defended, raised the indignation of Wickliffe, and he immediately published a reply, penned with such superiority, that he most successfully refuted the arguments of his adversary, and clearly proved the illegality of the homage received from the King of England by the Pope.

This defence spread the fame of Wickliffe's talents throughout the nation ; but, as might

have been expected, his interest proportionably declined in the court of Rome ; and, in 1370, the cause which he had there at issue was determined against him. Notwithstanding this disappointment, however, he enjoyed the patronage of the court of Edward, and his writings procured for him in particular the friendship of the Duke of Lancaster. His friends too in the University still continued as attached to him as ever ; and the chair of Professor of Divinity falling vacant in the year 1372, as a proof of their regard, a reward of his merit, and a compensation for his loss, the chancellor and regents elected him to fill that important and dignified station, and conferred on him a doctor's degree.

SECT. II.

Proceedings of Wickliffe in the University—he more explicitly unfolds his sentiments regarding the errors and corruptions in the Church—powerful opposition of the clergy—the King places him at the head of an embassy to the Pope—the benefits he derived from this journey to the Continent—he boldly attacks the abuses of Popery—styles the Roman Pontiff, Antichrist—five bulls sent from Rome to England against him—the reception they received—Wickliffe is cited to appear before an Ecclesiastical Court held at St. Paul's, London.

BEING elevated to an office which enabled him to advance the interests of religion and morality among his countrymen, Wickliffe commenced the duties of his dignified station by diffusing the light of truth, and checking the disorders, both of the clergy and the laity. “The vices of the religious orders,” says one of his biographers, “had led him to examine the nature of the system, under the countenance of which they committed such flagrant offences against the peace and morals of the country; and this examination convinced him, that the religion of Rome was the fruitful source of every thing disorderly and impure. But the inveteracy of

this system, wreathed about the necks of the people with a chain of influence, strengthened by antiquity, education, and fear, rendered measures of violence inexpedient and dangerous. In executing this purpose, he continued, and increased the attack which he had formerly made on the indolence and enormities of the monastic clergy; directing the eyes of his countrymen to what they could not fail to observe, and leading them to resist what they could not but hate and condemn." "At first," says Gilpin, "he thought it sufficient to lead his adversaries into logical and metaphysical disputations; accustoming them to hear novelties, and to bear contradictions. Nothing passed in the schools but learned arguments on the increase of time, on space, substance, identity. In these disputations he artfully intermixed, and pushed, as far as he durst, new opinions in divinity; sounding, as it were, the minds of his hearers. At length, finding he had a great party in the schools, and that he was listened to with attention, he ventured to be more explicit, and by degrees opened himself at large."

The celebrity of the lectures of Wickliffe soon attracted a vast concourse of students to

the University ; and finding that many of them were ready to support him, he at length ventured to be more explicit in unfolding the unscriptural tenets of the Popish Church. He was no less admired in the pulpit than in the schools. Instead of amusing his audience with the subtleties of scholastic disputation, or with encomiums on departed saints, he pressed upon them the doctrines and duties of Christianity. He next descanted on the corruptions of the Church, and on the speculative errors which had crept into her articles of belief ; tracing them to their earliest origin, and, with accuracy and perspicuity, showing the progress they had made, as they descended through the dark ages. Neither did he forget the profligacy of the clergy, and the usurpations and tyranny of the Roman Pontiff, — themes on which he reasoned with peculiar force, and declaimed with indignant spirit and copious eloquence.

It was not to be expected that the Romish clergy should tamely submit to the reiterated censures of our Reformer. They consequently determined to prosecute him with the utmost vigour ; and, though failing in several attempts,

they at length succeeded in depriving him of his office.

While persecuted by the clergy, however, Wickliffe was still patronized by the court. The Duke of Lancaster, in particular, commonly known by the name of John of Gaunt, had long entertained a high opinion of Wickliffe's learning and integrity, and was himself a determined opposer of the monks and prelates. Being at the same time a prince of violent passions, and by no means attached to the religious principles of the age, the clergy were highly incensed at his conduct, and by aspersing his character, both as a free thinker in religion, and an enemy to his country, they left no means untried to accomplish his ruin. The Duke retorted their calumnies with equal spirit, and employed every method in his power to bring the whole ecclesiastical order into contempt. "Wickliffe's opposition to their encroachments had gratified his malice; he waited with anxiety for its result; and when he discovered the Reformer to be in danger of suffering, interposed his authority, rescued him from the power of his adversaries, and brought him to court. By this introduction into public life, he afterwards enjoyed the means

of signalizing himself with greater success in the cause of religious liberty."

The tyranny of the Roman Pontiff was at this time severely felt in England, and was every day becoming so intolerable, that the parliament loudly remonstrated against his accumulating acts of oppression. Among the many grievances under which the country labored, none was attended with consequences more fatal to the kingdom, than the state of church preferments. The majority of benefices were subject to the disposal of the Pope, who commonly bestowed them on foreigners;* in consequence of which, religion decayed, the country was drained of money, and what was felt as a grievous burden on the nation, a body of insolent tithe-gatherers were set over the people, who, like the Egyptians of old, made "their lives bitter" by the rigor with which they executed their commission.

Determined, if possible, to obtain redress, the

* "By one crafty pretence or another," says Baber, "the Pope was continually disposing of the ecclesiastical benefices and dignities, without any regard had to the rights of those in whom they were vested, and not only aliens, who knew not the language, and were unacquainted with the habits and customs of those over whom they were appointed spiritual guides and pastors, but even boys, who were themselves under the discipline of pupilage, were presented to these usurped preferments."

Duke of Lancaster first obliged the bishops to send in lists of the number and value of preferments and benefices in each of their dioceses, which were rented by foreigners. The next step was to send ambassadors to the Pope to treat concerning the liberties of the Church of England. By the appointment of the King, Wickliffe and the Bishop of Bangor were placed at the head of this important embassy ; and, in 1374, they met the Pope's nuncio, the Bishops of Pampeluna and Semigaglia, and the Provost of Valenza, at Bruges. After a variety of conferences, the agents of Rome, finding themselves hard pressed by their antagonists, and perceiving that it would be much easier to evade a treaty when made, than in the present circumstances to avoid making it, at length agreed, that in future "the Pope should dispose of no benefices belonging to the English Church." As a reward for his faithfulness in this embassy, Wickliffe was nominated by the king to the prebend of Auste, in the diocese of Worcester, and in the same year was presented to the rectory of Lutterworth, in the diocese of Lincoln.

Though the court of Rome never intended to observe this treaty, and consequently little ad-

vantage was derived by it to the English nation, yet Wickliffe's journey to the continent was of vast importance to himself. His intercourse with the delegated authorities of the Pontificate, had given him ample opportunities of diving into its projects, and of detecting the sinister views of its policy. A large proportion of those corruptions in faith and practice which abounded in the Romish See was fully laid open to his penetrating eye; and in all the transactions of the clergy, he discovered a combination of avarice, ambition, and bigotry. No sooner, therefore, did he return to England, than he inveighed against the abuses of Popery, both in his public lectures and in his private conversation, in terms more unequivocal, and in language more indignant, than he had formerly used. He reproved, with just severity, the profligate lives of the clergy of all descriptions, and impugned, with the utmost freedom of speech, the unscriptural doctrines which they inculcated. Neither were his charges confined to their pride, their avarice, and their idleness; he taunted them with their ignorance, their hypocrisy, and with keeping back the wholesome words of sound doctrine and reproof, through fear of ob-

structing their own immediate temporal advantages. In his attacks upon the corruptions of the Church, he exposed those unscriptural articles of faith, which are wickedly supported for the base purpose of enriching the Apostolic See, at the expense of the eternal welfare of immortal souls. Even his Holiness the Pope did not escape the bitterness of his censures. Reviving the name which had been applied to him in the twelfth century, and which since the days of Wickliffe has never been forgotten, he styled that *dignified personage*, "ANTICHRIST, the proud worldly priest of Rome, and the most cursed of clippers, and purse-kervers." He averred that the Pope and his collectors drew out of the country poor men's livelihood, to the amount of many thousand marks a year; and added, that "though the realm had a huge hill of gold in it, and no other man took thereof except this proud worldly priest's collector, yet in process of time this hill would be levelled." In reference to the pomp and luxury of the bishops, and the affectation of splendor which the inferior clergy assumed, he used the most cutting language. "What a token of meekness and forsaking of worldly riches is this?" said he; "a

prelate, as an abbot or prior that is dead to the world, and pride and vanity thereof, to ride with fourscore horse, with harness of silver and gold, and to spend with earls and barons, both thousand marcs and pounds, to meyntene a false plea of the world, and forbare men of their right."

Reproofs expressed in the mildest terms generally incur displeasure, and sometimes hatred ; but censure conveyed in language so acrimonious as that used by Wickliffe, provoked the resentment, and procured him the vengeance of Rome ; and the English clergy in general, regarding him as an enemy and a traitor to the Church, eagerly seconded the persecution which was raised against him by the Papal court.

While Wickliffe was employed at Oxford, where he seems to have recovered his former station, in exposing the errors and superstitions of his adversaries, nineteen offensive articles, unfairly extracted from his lectures and writings, were dispatched by the English prelates to the court of Rome ; upon the receipt of which his Holiness, in his impatience to overwhelm a formidable innovator, sent no fewer than five bulls to England, all bearing the same date,

11th June, 1377, charging the authorities, both civil and ecclesiastical, to execute summary punishment on the offender. Three of these mandates were directed to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London; in the first of which he ordered these prelates to apprehend John Wickliffe, and imprison him, provided they found him guilty of the heresy with which he was charged. In the second, he enjoined them, if they could not find him, to fix up public citations in Oxford and other places, for his personal appearance before the Pope within the space of three months. And in the third, he commanded them to acquaint the king and his sons with the heresy of Wickliffe, and to require their assistance for its effectual extirpation. The fourth bull was addressed to the king himself, soliciting his co-operation with the prelates in bringing the heretic to condign punishment. And the fifth was despatched to the University of Oxford, in which his Holiness lamented the sloth and laziness of the chancellor and heads of that seminary, in permitting tares to spring up among the pure wheat; and particularly enjoined them, under the most severe penalties, not only to forbid the preaching of tenets which

would soon subvert both church and state, but to deliver up their Professor of Divinity to the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London.

The two last mentioned bulls were received and treated with that contempt which they richly merited. Edward having resigned the administration of affairs into the hands of his son the Duke of Lancaster, that nobleman shielded Wickliffe against the Papal mandates to the bishops, for as yet no act was in force which could empower a prelate to imprison, without the king's consent, any one who was deemed a heretic by the Church. The University, again, were for a long time disposed wholly to reject the pontifical injunctions; and when, after much deliberation, they had received the bull, they refused to give it the smallest degree of effect.

The little devotion which the University of Oxford had paid to the commands of the Roman Pontiff, highly incensed Courtney, Bishop of London, an inflamed bigot. Determined, if possible, to silence the Reformer, this prelate persuaded Sudbury, Archbishop of Canterbury, a man of uncommon moderation for the times in which he lived, to join with him in citing Wick-

liffe to appear before them within thirty days at St. Paul's, London. "It happened that, between the day of his citation and that of his appearance, Richard II., who had lately ascended the throne of England, held his first parliament, in which, on account of a threatened invasion from France, an important question was debated; viz. whether the kingdom of England might, upon a pressing occasion, lawfully detain the treasure of the realm, although the Pope required it on pain of censures, and by virtue of obedience due to him. Many discordant opinions having been given, the discussion was at length terminated by a universal consent to refer the resolution of the question to Dr. Wickliffe, who was esteemed the best casuist of his time. Though the fire of persecution had begun to rage, and the Papal thunders were threatening him with ruin, yet was he not deterred from answering the question in the affirmative, drawing his conclusions from the law of nature and the gospel. From the former, he argued upon the principles of self-preservation; from the latter, he contended that the Pope could not challenge the property of the kingdom, but under the title of alms, and, consequently, under

the pretence of works of mercy, according to the rules of charity : but in case of necessity, alms ought utterly to cease ; otherwise the kingdom itself might fall into ruin under the pretence of charity."

SECT. III.

The Reformer appears at London on the day appointed—violent dispute between Bishop Courtney and the Duke of Lancaster—abrupt termination of the Synod's proceedings—charges which were brought against Wickliffe—his increasing popularity—he continues his attacks on the Pope—maintains the necessity of translating the Bible into English—is summoned a second time to appear before the Bishops at Lambeth—gives in a written explanation of his opinions—extracts from that paper—the Court is obliged to dismiss the Reformer—he is seized with an alarming illness—attempts of the Friars to induce him to revoke his sentiments—his undaunted reply.

On receiving the summons to appear before the Bishops of London and Canterbury at St. Paul's, Wickliffe consulted with the Duke of Lancaster, how he ought to act so as to avert the fury of his adversaries. Finding it impossible, or at least inexpedient, to prevent his appearance, the

Duke determined to give him all the countenance in his power, and engaged Lord Percy, Earl Marshal of England, to accompany them thither. The occasion of this synod had collected so vast a concourse of people in the neighborhood of the church, that it was with difficulty Wickliffe and his protectors could pass through the crowd. When the Bishop of London saw, contrary to his expectations, Wickliffe so powerfully supported, his malevolent feelings were excited to the highest pitch, and in his passion he addressed Lord Percy in terms so insulting and overbearing, that the proud spirit of the Duke disdained to submit to the bad usage which he conceived he had received from that haughty prelate, and he accordingly answered him in language equally indignant and provoking. The dispute which followed is thus given by Fuller.

Bishop Courtney. "Lord Percy, if I had known what maisteries you would have kept in the church, I would have stopt you out from coming hither."

Duke of Lancaster. "He shall keep such maisteries here, though you say nay."

Lord Percy. "Wickliffe, sit down, for you

have many things to answer to, and you need to repose yourself on a soft seat."

Bishop Courtney. "It is unreasonable that one cited before his ordinary should sit down during his answer. He must, and shall stand."

Duke of Lancaster. "The Lord Percy his motion for Wickliffe is but reasonable, and as for you, my Lord Bishop, who are grown so proud and arrogant, I will bring down the pride, not of you alone, but of all the prelacy in England."

Bishop Courtney. "Do your worst, Sir."

Duke of Lancaster. "Thou bearest thyself so brag upon thy parents, which shall not be able to keep thee; they shall have enough to do to help themselves."

Bishop Courtney. "My confidence is not in my parents, nor in any man else, but only in God, in whom I trust, by whose assistance I will be bold to speak the truth."

Duke of Lancaster. "Rather than I will take these words at his hands, I would pluck the Bishop by the hair out of the church."

The latter words of the Duke, though spoken to a person near him, only in a half whisper,

were overheard by some of the by-standers, and spreading among the crowd, the assembly was soon in a violent commotion. The people cried aloud, that "they would rather lose their lives than suffer their Bishop to be so contemptuously treated;" but the nobleman, disregarding their menaces, carried off Wickliffe in safety. The tumultuous conduct of the populace at length obliged the delegates to break up the court, without having taken any step of consequence in the business.

It must be evident to every candid mind, that the conduct of these noblemen added no real honor to Wickliffe's cause; and it is but justice to say, that the deportment of the prelates was far less exceptionable than that of the patrons of the Reformer; neither does it appear that he discountenanced or ever censured their unjustifiable violence.

According to Walsingham, the heretical opinions with which Wickliffe was charged were the following:—"That the Church of Rome was not the head of the Universal Church; that St. Peter's authority was not superior to that of the other Apostles; that the Pope, in the power of the keys, had no more jurisdiction than any

common priest ; that neither the Pope, nor any other prelate, ought to have prisons for punishing offenders against the discipline of the Church, but that every person ought to be allowed the liberty of following what he believed to be truth ; and that, if the Church misbehaved, it was not only lawful, but meritorious, and consequently dutiful in the temporal power, to dispossess her of her endowments." These sentiments, which are substantially those of genuine Protestantism, must certainly give us a high opinion of Wickliffe's religious knowledge, force of mind, and freedom from the common prejudices of that age, exhibiting as they do, not only his zeal in attacking error and publishing the truth, but his firmness of mind in asserting every man's right to enjoy liberty of conscience.

The manner in which the deliberations of the assembly which was held at St. Paul's terminated, was highly favorable to Wickliffe's cause. Though he was accused of heresy, and solemnly summoned to answer for his opinions, yet his being dismissed without censure made a powerful impression on the people, and many of them not only believed him to be innocent, but did not hesitate to charge his adversaries with igno-

rance, if not with injustice. Even men of rank and talents began to espouse his sentiments, and his reputation for piety and truth was gradually increasing among the common people. This popularity was greatly augmented by the ability with which he pointed out the antichristian spirit and character of Rome, on the election, by the conclave of cardinals, of two popes, Urban VI. and Clement VII. On this occasion, he published a treatise, entitled, "Of the Schism of the Roman Pontiffs," which shook the faith of multitudes, and led them to examine the nature of that ecclesiastical system which they had been accustomed to revere, but which, they now began to suspect, had more in it of corruption and tyranny than of pure religion. Not long afterwards he published another work, entitled, "Of the Truth of the Scripture," in which he maintained "the necessity of translating the Bible into English; affirmed that the Old and New Testaments contained the whole will of God to man; and asserted the sufficiency of the revealed law of Christ to be the guide of the Church, and the profanity of any religious controversy, which is not decided by an appeal to this unerring standard."

It was thus that Wickliffe employed himself, instead of attending to the strict charge which it is said his persecutors gave him, to be silent in future respecting all those subjects which had given so much offence.

King Edward died in 1377, and was succeeded by Richard II. during whose minority, under the regency of his patron the Duke of Lancaster, our Reformer continued with unabated zeal and courage to instruct the people, without meeting with any extraordinary persecution. Upon the decline of the Duke's power, however, the English prelates made another attempt at carrying into execution the tyrannical designs of the Roman Pontiff. Accordingly, in 1378, they summoned him a second time to appear before the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the rest of the bishops, at Lambeth.* Wickliffe was not disobedient to this citation, but appeared at Lambeth on the day appointed. His judges having begun to question him respecting his sentiments, he gave in a paper containing a solemn protest, and an

* " 'This citation was made in consequence of their being frustrated in their design of imprisoning him, by the firmness of the Duke of Lancaster, who told them, that imprisonment for opinions could not be justified by the laws of England, and warned them of the consequences of proceeding to this extremity.' "

explanatory qualification of several of his positions which had been deemed erroneous or heretical. In this written explanation, which no friend of truth can justify, he appears to have been influenced either by the fear of his adversaries, or by a temporising spirit, which led him to conceal, or at least to qualify, opinions which he firmly believed.

It is no doubt painful to think of the inconsistencies to which the desire of temporal ease led this great and good man; yet in candor it must be acknowledged, that on this occasion his intrepidity and boldness in the cause of truth, seem to have deserted him. At the same time, it ought not to be concealed, that the authority of the explanations which he is said to have given in to the synod of Lambeth, has been frequently called in question by very able historians; and it is certain at least, that they are conveyed to us solely through the channel of Popish writers.

That the reader, however, may form some idea of the "Conclusions," as they are called, which were exhibited in the convocation, it may be proper to give one or two of them here: "All the race of mankind here on earth," says he,

"except Christ, have no power simply to ordain that St. Peter and his successors should politically rule over the Church for ever. His explanation before the assembly was to this effect : "This conclusion is self-evident ; inasmuch as it is not in man's power to stop the coming of Christ to judge the quick and the dead." From the conclusion itself, it would appear that Wickliffe meant to affirm, that the usurped political power of the Roman Pontiff might be subverted by the people ; but its explanation renders it equivocal, if not altogether nugatory.

Again, in another conclusion, he says, "When the Pope, or temporal lords, or any other persons, shall have endowed the Church with temporalities, it is lawful for them to take away the same temporalities, as it were by way of medicine to prevent sin, notwithstanding any excommunication, because they are not given but under a condition." In his explanation, however, he says, "The truth of this is evident ; because nothing ought to hinder a man from performing the principal works of charity. Yet, God forbid, that, by these words occasion should be given to the Lords temporal, to take away the goods of the Church."

The only other extract which we shall give is the following: "If there be a God," says he in his conclusion, "the temporal Lords may lawfully and meritoriously take away the riches of the Church, when the clergy offend habitually." But in the explanation, the language is very materially altered. "If," says he, "there be a God, he is omnipotent; if so, he can command the Lords temporal thus to act; and if he may thus command, they may lawfully take away such goods. But, God forbid that any should believe my intention to have been, that secular Lords may lawfully take away whatever goods they please by their own naked authority: only by the authority of the Church they may do so, in cases and in form limited by the laws."

If such were really the sophistical and evasive methods employed by Wickliffe, to explain his real sentiments, though, as formerly stated, the truth of them rests solely on the credibility of the Popish writers, we perceive in him, when he is standing before the synod of Lambeth, nothing of the spirit of a Reformer. Though this part of his conduct, however, cannot be justified, yet, considering the age in which he lived, the violent opposition of his enemies, his other-

wise strenuous resistance of corruption, together with his great merits in general as a Reformer he ought at least, on this occasion, to be treated with lenity.

While the bishops were deliberating on Wickliffe's written explanation, which, though cautiously expressed, was far from being in every point satisfactory, Sir Lewis Clifford, by command of the Queen Dowager, entered the assembly, and, in an authoritative tone, commanded the prelates to desist from proceeding to any decision against the Reformer. The absolute order thus given by Clifford, together with the menaces of the people, who both within and without doors were heard exclaiming, that they would not see Wickliffe ill-treated, so terrified his judges, that they immediately dismissed him, with only admonishing him to beware of continuing to propagate the opinions for which he had been arraigned by that ecclesiastical court.

The Popish advocate Walsingham, when narrating this event, loses all patience, and while he vents his spleen on the Reformer and Clifford, he does not hesitate to censure the prelates, for suffering Wickliffe at this time to escape that punishment which, in his zeal for Romish ty-

ranny and error, he imagined the Reformer deserved. "The bishops," says he, "who had professed themselves determined to do their duty in spite of threats or promises, and even at the hazard of their lives, became so intimidated during the examination of the apostate, that their speeches were as soft as oil, to the public loss of their dignity, and the damage of the whole Church. And when Clifford pompously delivered his message, they were so overcome with fear, that you would have thought them to be as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs. Thus," continues this historian, "this false teacher, this complete hypocrite, evaded the hand of justice, and could no more be called before the same prelates, because their commission expired by the death of Pope Gregory XI." Fuller, however, makes a very different observation on this event. "The bishops," says he, "were struck with a panic fear. And the person of this John Wickliffe was saved, as was once the doctrine of his godly namesake; '*They feared the people, for all men counted John that he was a prophet indeed.*' Mark xi. 32."

To the prohibition of the bishops, not to dis-

seminate his doctrines among the people, Wickliffe paid very little regard. He not only preached openly, and without reserve, in his own parish, but frequently itinerated through several parts of the kingdom, making known to his countrymen the glad tidings of salvation through the blood of atonement. He likewise generally visited the University once every year, to discharge the duties of his professorship; during which he used every effort to promote the improvement and spiritual interests of the students.

While at Oxford in 1379, Wickliffe was seized with an alarming illness. Imagining that his life was now near its close, and wishing to regain the reputation which they had lost from the exposure made of them by this illustrious confessor, the friars cherished the hope that Wickliffe might now be induced to revoke what he had said and taught to their disparagement. To effect this purpose, a solemn deputation, consisting of a friar of each of the mendicant orders, waited upon him, and insidiously exhorted him to retract his errors, and acknowledge his regret for having injured them, both in his sermons and writings. Indignant at this request, Wickliffe, having given them a patient

hearing, ordered his attendant to raise him up on his pillow, when, with a severe countenance, and in a firm tone of voice, he exclaimed, "I shall not die, but live, and still farther declare the evil deeds of the friars." Little expecting such a reply from a man whose earthly career they considered near its close, the deputies retired in confusion, and afterwards felt most severely the accomplishment of his prediction.

The parliament which assembled in 1380, passed an act against the foreign ecclesiastics, which rendered them incapable of holding benefices in England, and petitioned the King to expel all the French and Italian monks, who were living on the spoils of their extortions from the people. This gave fresh vigor to Wickliffe's exertions, and he continued, under the sanction of the state, to expose the vices both of the religious and secular orders. Soon after an extensive and alarming insurrection broke out, occasioned by an oppressive tax imposed on the people. The insurgents, headed by illiterate and obscure men, marched in prodigious force to London, where they committed the most cruel and inhuman excesses. Wickliffe and his followers are charged by the monkish writers, with

having been partly instrumental in fomenting this rebellion ; but the history of it sufficiently proves, that it was unconnected alike with religion and with our Reformer. When the ring-leaders were brought to trial, they never insinuated that Wickliffe's doctrines were the cause of their rebellion. On the contrary, among those who suffered most, either in their persons or their property, were many who were zealous promoters of the cause of reformation ; they sought the life and pillaged the palace of the Duke of Lancaster, the avowed protector of the Reformer ; all which would not have been the case, had Wickliffe or his disciples favored these turbulent proceedings.

SECT. IV.

Unwearied efforts of Wickliffe to effect a Reformation—his noble arguments in defence of the right of the people to read the Bible—he translates and publishes the Sacred Volume—indignation of the Clergy at his proceedings—their reasonings on this subject—Wickliffe attacks the doctrine of Transubstantiation—the Heads of the University condemn his opinions as heretical—he appeals in vain to the King in Parliament—is summoned before an Ecclesiastical Court at Oxford, but dismissed without punishment—another Court held at London for the purpose of examining his opinions—he is compelled to bid a final adieu to Oxford.

It has been already shown, that Wickliffe did not confine himself to attacks on the indolence, luxury, and immorality of the monastic orders, or the exorbitant claims and contemptible superstitions of the Papacy; his great aim was to effect a reformation much more important, to exhibit to his countrymen, on the one hand, a true picture of the innumerable abominations of the religion of Rome, and, on the other, to make known to them the pure doctrines and true spirit of the gospel of Christ. To accomplish ends so important and glorious, he now had recourse to a method, which above all

others was calculated to shake the very foundations of the Popish hierarchy, and to disseminate throughout England the light of Divine truth. This was his translation of the Scriptures into the vernacular tongue, a work which, says one of his biographers, "alone sufficed to render his name immortal."

When Christianity was first introduced into England, the only language in which the books of the sacred volume were translated, that was intelligible to a European, was the Latin, a circumstance which necessarily occasioned that version to be generally received throughout the western world. "As the Latin tongue became a dead language," says Baber, "the Romish hierarchy were too crafty to encourage any translation of the sacred volume, which would place the key of Divine knowledge in the power of the people. They plainly saw, that as long as they had the keeping of this treasure in their own hands, they could impose upon mankind, for doctrines of revelation, whatever articles of faith they pleased, and thus pursue their schemes of interest with less fear of contradiction. Wickliffe, who saw the advantage they enjoyed, and had detected their abuse of it, had long

been persuaded, that if ever the prejudices which had fastened themselves upon mankind were to be effectually loosened, it must be by laying the Bible open to the people. To effect this, he had from an early period of his life devoted his various learning, and all the powerful energies of his mind ; and at length, by intense application on his own part, and with some assistance from a few of the most learned of his followers, he had the glory to complete a book which, alone, would have been sufficient to have procured him the veneration of his own age, and the commendations of posterity."

In order to prepare the world for the appearance of a work, which he knew would exasperate the clergy, Wickliffe pleaded in language at once spirited and unanswerable, the *right* of the people to read the sacred volume. "Scripture," says he, "is the faith of the Church, and the more it is known in its true sense, the better ; therefore as secular men ought to know the faith, the Divine word is to be taught them in whatever language is best known to them. The truth of the faith is clearer and more exact in the Scripture than the priests know how to express it ; and, if any one may say so, there are

many prelates who are ignorant of Scripture, and others who conceal things contained in it. It seems useful, therefore, that the faithful should themselves search and discover the sense of the faith, by having the Scriptures in a language which they know and understand. Christ and his apostles converted men, by making known to them the Scriptures in that language which was familiar to them. Why then ought not the modern disciples of Christ to collect fragments from the loaf; and, as they did, clearly open the Scriptures to the people, that they may know them. The apostle teaches, that we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, and be answerable for all the goods intrusted to us; it is necessary, therefore, the faithful should know these goods and the use of them, that they may give a proper answer. For the answer by a prelate or an attorney, will not *then* avail, but every one must answer in his *own* person."

This important work was at length finished, and published to the world in the year 1380. He was assisted in its translation by several learned men, whose names have not reached us. They appear to have been unacquainted with Hebrew, but by collecting a number of Latin

Bibles, comparing them together, and consulting the quotations of ancient divines, they endeavored to correct the text ; and from this corrected copy made their translation. They afterwards examined the best commentators then extant, particularly Nicolas Lyra, and inserted in the margin the passages in which the Latin differed from the Hebrew.*

The appearance of the Scriptures in English, as might have been expected, exasperated and alarmed the clergy and the favorers of the Romish Church. Seeing a volume which unfolded their deeds of darkness and delusion, presented to every man in the kingdom, and reflecting on the consequences which might follow from the people having it now in their power to read and determine for themselves with respect to matters of faith and practice, they trembled for that fabric which had been reared and supported on the ignorance of mankind, and, to use the words of Scripture, "gnawed their tongues for pain." With almost one voice, therefore, the clergy assailed the Reformer with angry menaces and scurrilous abuse. They represented that the

* Some farther account of Wickliffe's translation, with a specimen of the work itself, will be found in the Appendix.

Scriptures were profaned, by being subjected to the unhallowed examination of the laity, and even brought a bill into parliament to suppress the obnoxious translation. To their mortification, however, the bill was thrown out by a great majority, and the people were permitted "to read in their own language, the wonderful works of God."

The following specimen of the opinions and reasoning of the churchmen of those days, concerning Wickliffe's translation of the Bible, may be instructive as well as entertaining to the reader. "Christ," says a learned canon of Leicester, and a contemporary of our Reformer, "committed the gospel to the clergy and doctors of the Church, that they might minister it to the laity and weaker persons, according to the exigency of the times and person's wants; but this Master John Wickliffe translated it out of Latin into English; and by that means laid it more open to the laity, and women who could read, than it used to be to the most learned of the clergy, and those of them who had the best understanding. And so the gospel pearl is cast abroad and trodden under swine, and that which used to be precious both to clergy and laity, is

made as it were the common jests of both ; and the jewel of the church is turned into the sports of the laity."

Unintimidated either by the clamours or the menaces of the clergy, Wickliffe proceeded a step farther, and attacked that favorite doctrine of the Popish Church—transubstantiation. The first disclosure of his opinions concerning the real presence was in 1381, in his public lectures as Professor of Divinity at Oxford. In these lectures, he endeavored to refute this absurd article of Romish belief, and to establish the true and scriptural notion of the Lord's Supper, that the substance of the bread and wine remains after consecration, and that the body and blood of Christ are not substantially, but figuratively contained in them. "The consecrated host," says he, "which we see upon the altar, is neither Christ nor any part of him, but an effectual sign of him." The "conclusions," sixteen in number, of which this was the first, he offered to defend publicly in the schools. His adversaries, however, who were gaining ground in the University, prohibited any discussion on the subject ; on which Wickliffe published a defence of his doctrine, in which, though in some parts un-

satisfactory and perplexed, he unquestionably denied this important doctrine of the Popish Church.

The chief opponent to the opinion of Wickliffe concerning the Lord's Supper was Dr. Barton, at that time vice-chancellor of Oxford, who strenuously resisted all attempts at religious reformation, under the pretence of their being innovations, which threatened to subvert all religion. In his efforts to silence the Reformer, and to arrest the progress of his doctrine, he persuaded twelve of the doctors of the University to concur with him in issuing a decree, by which Wickliffe's opinion was condemned as heretical, and himself and his hearers were threatened, if they persisted in their errors, with imprisonment and excommunication. From this decree Wickliffe appealed, not to the Pope, for he had denied his authority in such matters, but to the King in Parliament. His appeal, however, met with no support. His hitherto powerful supporter, the Duke of Lancaster, either afraid to hurt his own credit, which was now on the decline, or not approving of Wickliffe's sentiments on this peculiar tenet, instead of befriending him, advised him to renounce these

novel opinions, and submit to the doctrine of the Church. Thus, "as long as Wickliffe's aim, in his opposition to the Church of Rome," says Baber, "seemed to be no more than to knock off the spiritual fetters with which the civil power was shackled, he met with a ready support from those who conducted the government of the country ; but when he began to unfold the more important objects of his gigantic plan, the statesmen of those days deemed it perhaps politic to give him no countenance in opinions which were purely theological."

Pressed on all sides by clerical vengeance, Wickliffe had now to brave the storm which was ready to burst on him, unsupported by political influence. The prelates, who saw with malevolent satisfaction their formidable opponent discountenanced by the state, immediately summoned him before an ecclesiastical court at Oxford. Wickliffe appeared on the day appointed, and read in Latin, before several bishops, the chancellor of the University, and a great number of doctors, a long and obscure confession, which his enemies have called a retraction. The majority of the assembly appearing satisfied with the explanation of his opinions re-

specting the doctrine of "the real presence," the court was obliged to dismiss him without censure. The chancellor and several others, however, considered, not without reason, this confession as a vindication rather than a recantation of his sentiments, and as soon as it was published, they employed all their ingenuity to hold it up to the derision and hatred of the people. But to their inexpressible mortification, the followers of the Reformer rapidly increased, and both among the students in the University and throughout the kingdom, his doctrines received so favorable a reception, that, as a writer of those times informs us, "if you met two persons on the road, you might be certain that one of them was a Lollard." *

* The following, the substance of which is derived from Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, appears to be the true meaning of this term: The term *Lollhard* is compounded of an old German word, *lollen* or *tullen*, and *hard*, a termination frequent in ancient Dutch words. *Lollen* signifies to sing with a low voice; and a Lollard, or Lollhard, in its original acceptation, therefore meant a singer of songs in general. In process of time, it became more limited in its meaning, and was applied exclusively to religious singers, in consequence of which, the word *Lollhard* acquired the same meaning as the word *Beghard*, which denoted a person remarkable for piety, for in all the ancient records from the eleventh century, these words are synonymous. The Franciscan *Tertiaries*, who were remarkable for their prayers, and other pious exercises, often go by the name of Lollards. The *Cellite Brethren*, or *Alexians*, whose piety was very exemplary, no sooner appeared in Flanders,

Alarmed at the rapid spread of Wickliffe's opinions, Bishop Courtney, having obtained the See of Canterbury, and received the Papal insignia, confirming him in his archiepiscopal jurisdiction, called a court composed of the superior clergy, "for the purpose of examining the heresies of Wickliffe and his followers." This convocation was held May 17th, 1382, in the monastery of the Greyfriars, London. It seems doubtful whether Wickliffe himself was cited to appear before this assembly, as the names of a

about the beginning of the fourteenth century, than the people gave them the title of Lollards. A particular reason for *their* being distinguished by this name was, that they were public singers, who made it their business, from motives of compassion and piety, to visit and comfort those, who being infected by pestilential disorders, were shamefully neglected by the clergy, and to take care of the interment of those who died; on which occasion they sang a dirge over their remains, as they carried them to the grave. The clergy, whose reputation was not a little hurt by their active and useful services in the cause of humanity, and the mendicant friars, who found their profits diminished by the growing credit of these Cellites or Alexians, became inveterately exasperated against them, propagated injurious suspicions concerning them, and endeavored to persuade the people, that, innocent and beneficent as the Lollards seemed to be, they were in reality the contrary, being tainted with the most pernicious sentiments of a religious kind, and secretly addicted to all sorts of vices. Thus by degrees the name *Lollard* became infamous; and any person, to whatever sect he belonged, who covered pretended heresies or crimes, under an external profession of piety, received this contemptuous name. For the same reason it was applied as a term of reproach to the followers of Wickliffe in England, and to the earliest opposers of Popery in Bohemia, Germany, Flanders, and Switzerland.

few of his followers only are mentioned in the records. But if he was summoned, he refused to obey the citation, claiming the privilege of being exempted from episcopal jurisdiction, on the ground of being a member of, and holding an office in, the University. The court, however, proceeded to consider a list of conclusions, pretended to have been taken from the writings of the Reformer ; but no sooner had they entered upon their deliberations, than a violent earthquake shook the monastery. An occurrence so very unusual, connected as it appeared to many of the bishops to be with the object of their meeting, so terrified them, that throwing down their papers, they cried out, "the business is displeasing to God." The Archbishop, however, possessing greater presence of mind, soon allayed their fears by the following ready and ingenious explanation of the event : " If this earthquake," said he, " means any thing, it portends the downfall of heresy. For, as noxious vapors are confined in the bowels of the earth, and are expelled by these violent concussions ; so there are many heresies shut up in the hearts of reprobate men, and through our endeavors the kingdom must be purified from all these pes-

tilential opinions; but this cannot be done without great commotion." Having quieted their minds by this artful address, the court entered upon the examination of the conclusions, ten of which they condemned as heretical, and fourteen as erroneous and repugnant to the Church.

The objectionable doctrines, together with the sentence of the court, being published, Wickliffe defended his real opinions with great spirit, vindicated himself from the false charges which had been brought against him, and exposed the mean arts which they had practised in misrepresenting his sentiments. Among the monstrous opinions which these designing prelates pretended were held by our Reformer, the following one may serve as a specimen, that "God ought to obey the devil."—"Such things," says Wickliffe, "do they invent of Catholic men, that they may blacken their reputation, as if they held this impious opinion, that God is a devil, or any other heretical tenet; and they are prepared by false and slanderous witnesses to fix such heresies on good men, as if they had invented them."

Finding that neither the strong measures which had been taken at Oxford, nor his own proceed-

ings at "the earthquake-council,"* proved sufficient to silence the Reformer, Courtney turned his thoughts towards more compulsory measures. With this view he brought a bill into parliament, "empowering the Archbishop and his suffragans to arrest and imprison all persons who privately or publicly should maintain heresies or notorious errors." Though this bill passed in the House of Lords, yet upon the representation of the Commons to the King, that it had been procured without their consent, it was subsequently lost. Not in the least discouraged, however, Courtney next had recourse to his Sovereign Richard II. ; and from that weak prince he obtained "the King's patent, directed to the chancellor and proctors at Oxford, appointing them inquisitors-general, and ordering them to banish and expel from the University and town of Oxford all who were advocates of Wickliffe's heresies, and even all who should dare to receive into their inns or houses Wickliffe himself, or any other of his friends, suspected of the like."

From this storm Wickliffe prudently retired,

* This is a term used by Wickliffe himself, he having afterwards frequently styled this assembly, "the council of the herydene,"—herydene being the old English word for earthquake.

and bade a final adieu to Oxford.* The unwearied persecution of the Archbishop thus prevailed ; and he had the satisfaction of seeing the man, whom for so many years he had in vain pursued, retreating at length before his power into an obscure part of the kingdom. His triumph, however, as he found to his experience, was by no means complete, for not only were the doctrines of Wickliffe disseminated throughout every corner of the kingdom, but there still remained to the Reformer himself a vigorous mind and an unsubdued spirit.

* The disputes at this time ran so high in Oxford, between the friends and the opponents of Wickliffe, that many of the students carried, concealed under their gowns, offensive weapons, to avenge the cause of their party whenever they heard any thing alleged against it. Upon receiving the royal patent, the chancellor endeavored to excuse himself from obeying the King's commands, stating, that not only his own life, but that even the peace of the University, would be endangered by his compliance : but the Archbishop, deaf to every remonstrance which militated against his determined purpose, was peremptory in his orders that the King's instructions should be obeyed.

SECT. V.

Urban VI. solicits aid from England to assist him in carrying on war against his rival **Clement VII.**—indignation of **Wickliffe** at Urban's conduct—he publishes a treatise against that Pontiff—Urban is prevented from inflicting on him summary punishment by the prospect of the Reformer's dissolution—death and burial of **Wickliffe**—his bones are afterwards dug up and burnt, by order of the Council of Constance—calumnies of his enemies—his character—his religious sentiments.

THE schism in the Papacy, as formerly noticed, occasioned by the election of **Urban VI.** and **Clement VII.** still continuing, Urban was determined to decide the contest with his rival by force of arms. With this view he solicited from England, where his supremacy was acknowledged, assistance both in money and men to enable him to carry on the war, and granted the most plenary indulgences and pardons to all who, either by personal service or pecuniary aid, contributed to the advancement of his cause. Though now in the decline of life, **Wickliffe**, filled with honest indignation at the conduct of these men, who, pretending to be the vicegerents of Him who inculcates forbearance and

peace, were using every effort to turn Christendom into a field of carnage and blood,—took up his pen once more, and severely censured the Roman Pontiffs on the subject of the war, in the following terms: “The seal or banner of Christ on the Cross, that is token of peace, mercy, and charity, for to slee all Christen men, for love of twaie false priests, that ben open Antichrist, for to meyntene their worldly state, to oppress Christendom worse than Jews, weren agenst Holy Writ, and life of Christ and his Apostles.” He accordingly asks, “Why wole not the proud priest of Rome grant full pardon to all men for to live in peace, and charity, and patience, as he doth to all men to fight and slee Christen men?”

The publication of a treatise which contained reproofs so acrimonious, filled Urban with the most ungovernable rage, and very nearly involved Wickliffe in far greater troubles than any which he had yet experienced. But Divine Providence graciously delivered the Reformer from farther persecution; for soon after the publication of this treatise he was struck with palsy, and though he lingered for a considerable time, his enemies sensible of his approaching dissolution,

allowed him, contrary to their usual practice, to spend the remainder of his days in tranquillity.

To the last, Wickliffe attended divine service, notwithstanding his enfeebled frame and shattered constitution. At length, on the 28th of December 1384, whilst he was engaged in public worship in his church at Lutterworth, he received a second and fatal shock of the palsy, which, on the 31st of the same month, put a period to the valuable life of this great and good man. "Such was the life of John Wickliffe," says Gilpin, "whom we hesitate not to admire as one of the greatest ornaments of the country, and as one of those prodigies whom Providence raises up, and directs as its instruments to enlighten mankind. His amazing penetration, his rational manner of thinking, and the noble freedom of his spirit, are equally the object of our admiration. Wickliffe was in religion, what Bacon was afterwards in science, the great detector of those arts and glosses which the barbarism of ages had drawn together to obscure the mind of man."

Wickliffe's body was buried in the chancel of his church at Lutterworth, and lay there, till his enemies, actuated by the most contemptible ma-

lice, violated the sanctuary of the grave, and wreaked their vengeance on his ashes. This indecent act was occasioned by a decree of the Council of Constance, in the year 1415, when, after forty five articles of the Reformer's doctrines had been condemned, and himself declared to have died an obstinate heretic, his bones were ordered, if they could be distinguished from the bones of the faithful, to be dug up, and thrown upon a dunghill. The sentence, however, was not executed till thirteen years after, when orders for that purpose were sent by Pope Martin V. to Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln. The bishop's officers accordingly disinterred the remains of Wickliffe, after they had lain undisturbed in the grave for the period of forty four years, and having burnt them, they cast the ashes into the Swift, a brook that ran by Lutterworth.

Fuller observes in his Church History, that "though Wickliffe had no *tomb*, he had an *epitaph*, such as it was, which a monk afforded him, and that it was no worse, thank his want, not of *malice*, but *invention*, for not finding out worse expressions." The following is a copy of this piece of low and contemptible scurrility :—"The

devil's instrument, churches enemy, peoples confusion, heretics idol, hypocrites mirror, schisms broacher, hatreds sower, lyes forger, flatteries sinke, who at his death despaired like Cain, and stricken by the horrible judgments of God, breathed forth his wicked soul to the dark mansion of the divell!!”

Another bigoted Papist endeavored to insult the memory of Wickliffe in the following words, upon which it would be superfluous to make any remark:—“It was reported,” says he, “that Wickliffe had prepared accusations and blasphemies, which he had intended, on the day he was taken ill, to have uttered in his pulpit against *Thomas a Becket*, the saint and martyr of the day; but by the judgment of God he was suddenly struck, and the palsy seized his limbs; and that mouth which was to have spoken huge things against God, and his Saint, and the Holy Church, was miserably drawn aside, and afforded a frightful spectacle to the beholders! His tongue was speechless, and his head shook, showing plainly that the curse of God was upon him!!”

That there were inconsistencies in the conduct of Wickliffe, is readily acknowledged, and

has been already shown in the course of this memoir ; “ but envy,” says Fuller, “ has falsely fathered many foul aspersions upon him ;” and it must appear evident to every impartial mind, that his claim to the character of a reformer, and a man of piety, is clear and undoubted. Though his passions were violent, he was by no means a visionary ; on the contrary, acuteness of discernment, soundness of judgment, and indefatigable industry, were the characteristic features of his mind. The charge which Mr. Hume has brought against him is unfounded and unfair : “ He appears,” says that historian, “ to have been strongly tinctured with enthusiasm, and to have been thereby the better qualified to oppose a Church whose distinguishing character was superstition.” “ It was his enthusiasm, then, it seems, and not his rational arguments, that made him a formidable adversary to the Church of Rome. If Mr. Hume had not been under the influence of prejudice, it is impossible but he must have admired the noble freedom and rational manner in which this great Reformer surmounted the restraints of his education, and the slavish principles of the times.”

Previous to the order of the Council of Con-

stance for burning the bones of Wickliffe, a testimonial to his character was publicly given by the University of Oxford, dated in 1406, which declares, "That all his conduct through life was sincere and commendable; that his conversation from his youth upward, to the time of his death, was so praiseworthy and honest, that never at any time was there a particle of suspicion raised against him; and that he vanquished by the force of Scriptures, all such as slandered Christ's religion. God forbid that our prelates should condemn such a man as a heretic, who has written better than any others in the University, on logic, philosophy, divinity, morality, and the speculative arts."

One of his biographers, the Rev. Henry Hervey Baber, who has bestowed great labor in endeavoring to give a faithful delineation of Wickliffe's character and principles, makes the following just remarks on the biographies which are given of Wickliffe by several other historians: "Many and contradictory are the accounts we have of the opinions of Dr. Wickliffe. In his lifetime he was accused of being the author of many doctrines which he had never avowed; and from those sentiments, which he had the

honesty to profess, were often drawn the most unwarrantable conclusions. The monkish writers, his earliest historians, and his implacable foes, have most wickedly mistated his tenets ; and even his Protestant admirers, for want of due information, have imputed to him principles which he never maintained."

In addition to what has been already stated concerning the religious sentiments of Wickliffe, the following doctrines contained in many of his numerous writings, will give the reader a still more correct idea of the sentiments of this great Reformer. Having for the most part rested his faith upon, and drawn his doctrines from the Scriptures, he contended that the Sacred Volume contained of itself a sufficient and perfect rule of Christian belief and practice. "The authority of the Holy Scriptures," says he, "which is the law of Christ, infinitely surpasses any other writing, and is independent on any other authority." He clearly held the doctrines of the election of grace, frequently calling the true Church an assembly of predestinated persons,—the natural depravity of man, and his utter inability to do any thing to merit salvation,—and that justification is to be obtained solely through the right-

eousness of Christ. To those who imagined that they could obtain salvation partly in consequence of their own good works, he replied with this prayer, "Heal us gratis, O Lord!"

Wickliffe strongly opposed the assertion, that the Pope was the head of the Church, and argued with great acuteness against the extravagant authority usurped by the hierarchy. He also denied the right of the Pope's interference, in the smallest degree, in temporal matters, confining his powers to spiritual concerns, and that only so far as it was exercised in conformity to the rules of Scripture. Though he makes frequent mention of seven sacraments, yet his notion of those five which Protestants reject, so little accorded with the sentiments of the Church of Rome, that he is accused by his Popish enemies of maintaining that there were only two sacraments. It has been already shown that he made a bold attack on that corner stone of Roman Catholic superstition—transubstantiation; and it were equally to be wished that he had as unhesitatingly rejected the unscriptural doctrine of purgatory. This article of Popish faith, however, Wickliffe admitted, and it must be classed among the errors of that Reformer. Yet he

does not seem to allow that the pains and sufferings of purgatory may be mitigated or shortened by the prayers of men on earth, or the intercession of saints in heaven. On the contrary, he denied the efficacy of the mediation of the saints in heaven, asserting that the only Mediator between God and man, is Christ Jesus; and though he was of opinion, that their memory ought to be so honored, that they should be imitated, yet he decidedly condemned giving them religious homage.

Wickliffe expressed, in the most unequivocal terms, his disapprobation of the baleful doctrine of pardons and indulgences; for he esteemed them not only unscriptural, but administering to sin. These feigned indulgences or pardons, by which "prelates," says he, "robben men of their money, are taught never in all the gospels, and never used in neither Peter, ne Paul, nor any other Apostle of Christ. Rich men trusten to flee to heaven thereby withouten pain, and therefore dreaden sin the less; and of very contrition, and leaving of sin, and of doing alms to most needy men, is little spoken of. Again, this feyned pardon is a sotil merchaundize of Antichrists clerk to magnifien their feyned power,

and to gotten worldly goods, and to make men drede not sin, but sikerly to wallow therein as hoggis."

To conclude, in the words of the learned Baber, "The works of the Evangelist of our Reformation were, as long as Wickliffism swayed the sentiments of mankind, in so great request, that they were industriously collected, and eagerly perused. To annihilate writings, the depositories of opinions which the hierarchy felt to be subversive of their interests, the Church of Rome resorted, without scruple, to every means which fear and its associate, cruelty, suggested, and which power had at its command. In the lifetime of Wickliffe, the students at Oxford were forbidden to read his productions, and as many of them as could be procured were publicly burnt in the presence of the Chancellor of that University. Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, perceiving the rapid strides which Wickliffism was making through the land, prohibited the sale of his books under the severest penalties. In these and after times, the readers of them were not only arrested, imprisoned, banished, and excommunicated, but, when the persecution of the Lollards was at its most cruel height, fre-

quent, alas ! were the instances in which they were condemned to the fire, with the volume which the Catholics so feared and detested, suspended from their neck. In Bohemia, a country in which the opinions of Wickliffe had been early planted, and had taken deep root, the writings of the English Reformer met with the same fate as in Britain. But happily this savage and detestable conduct failed of its intended effect. The cruelties which had been exercised upon the persons of the Lollards, excited in the people compassion for the sufferers, and roused a spirit of indignation against their persecutors ; and the works of Wickliffe, which the Church of Rome, with all its unnatural and enormous power, could never suppress, continued to be still read, and the more they were read, the more did they awaken that spirit of inquiry, which eventually effected the establishment of that Reformed religion, which is a constituent part of the glory, and contributes so essentially to the happiness, of Great Britain."

CHAP. II.

JOHN HUSS.

SECT. I.

Wickliffe's writings circulated in Bohemia—birth of Huss—his proficiency in learning—he is appointed Rector of the University of Prague—his attachment to the works of the English Reformer—the Archbishop of Prague becomes his enemy—contest among the members of the University—Wickliffe's writings destroyed by order of the Archbishop—Huss appeals to the Pope—he is forbidden to preach at Prague—his employment while at Hussenitz.

PREVIOUS to the death of Wickliffe, Richard II. of England having married Ann, the sister of Wincellaus, king of Bohemia, a free intercourse was opened, in consequence of this family alliance, between the two kingdoms. Among other Bohemians who at this period visited England, was a gentleman of the name of Faulfisch, who having, while at Oxford, become acquainted with the writings of Wickliffe, carried several of them

to his own country on his return. The person to whom Bohemia was chiefly indebted, however, for conveying to that kingdom the evangelical views of the English Reformer, was Peter Payne, principal of Edmund Hall in the University of Oxford. Payne was a great admirer of Wickliffe, and was equally distinguished for his talents and his inflexible opposition to the friars. Having rendered himself obnoxious to the clergy by his zeal in support of Wickliffe's doctrines, he fled from England to Bohemia, carrying along with him a number of that Reformer's works. The introduction into Bohemia of writings esteemed heretical by the Popish Church, and their rapid spread in that kingdom, alarmed Subinco, the Archbishop of Prague, who issued his orders that every person who was in possession of them should bring the books to him, in order that such as contained any heretical doctrines might be burnt. In consequence of this mandate, we are informed that two hundred volumes of them, finely written, and adorned with costly covers, belonging, it is probable, to some of the nobility, were committed to the flames by this zealous supporter of Romish error. So widely, however, were the works of

the English Reformer spread in Bohemia, that the Archbishop found it utterly impossible to exterminate them. The members of the University, and in particular JOHN HUSS, on whose mind the principles of Wickliffe had made an indelible impression, were highly displeased at Subinco's conduct, and complained of this infringement of the liberties and privileges of their seminary, the members of which had a right to read all sorts of books without molestation.

Huss was born at Hussenitz, a village in Bohemia, in 1373. His parents were not in affluent circumstances, but they gave him what was at that period considered a liberal education, which he improved by close application to his studies in the University of Prague, where he successively obtained the degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Master of Arts, and Bachelor of Divinity. Among other honors which were about this period conferred on him was that of Rector of the University, an office which he filled with honor to himself, and with credit to that flourishing seminary. In the Church too, his character was no less eminent than in the Academy. In 1400 he was nominated preacher of Bethlehem

one of the largest churches in Prague ; and in the same year he was made confessor to Sophia of Bavaria, the wife of Winceslaus, a princess by whom he was highly esteemed.

At this early period Huss began to distinguish himself by his freedom and zeal in censuring the corrupt morals of the laity, as well as the vices of the clergy ; and though the monks, under the protection of some of the nobles, complained of him to king Winceslaus, yet that prince, who was no friend to the clergy, declined to interfere. The celebrity, indeed, of Huss as a teacher, and his piety as a divine, not only gained him respect, but induced numbers among all ranks to applaud, rather than condemn, his laudable attempts to repress the abounding immoralities of the age.

Various causes, as already noticed, had contributed to the dissemination of the writings of Wickliffe in Bohemia. These writings were perused by Huss, and having found that many of the opinions which they contained coincided with those which he himself had been led to entertain, he continued to preach openly against the errors and corruptions of the Church. We are not informed of the precise period when his

mind received a favorable impression of the works of the English Reformer. It is said by some historians, that at first he held them in detestation ; and it is not at all improbable, that he found it to be as difficult to overcome the prejudices which he entertained regarding the works of Wickliffe, as Luther did a century afterwards, when he first read those of Huss. "When I studied at Erfurt," says Luther, "I found in the library of the convent, a book entitled 'The Sermons of John Huss.' I was anxious to know the doctrines of that arch-heretic. My astonishment in the reading of them was incredible. What, thought I, could move the Council to burn so great a man, so able and judicious an expositor of Scripture ! But then the name of Huss was held in abomination ; if I mentioned him with honor, I imagined the sky would fall, and the sun be darkened ; I, therefore, shut the book with indignation. But I comforted myself with the thought, that perhaps he had written this before he fell into heresy !" Though prejudices similar to these, however, appear to have filled the mind of Huss, on his first reception of the works of Wickliffe, yet "the eyes of his understanding being opened"

by the spirit of all truth, he soon perceived the excellence and scriptural nature of the doctrines which were taught by the English Reformer, and became their decided supporter. He used indeed to call Wickliffe an angel sent from heaven to enlighten mankind, and would mention among his friends, his meeting with that author's writings as the most happy circumstance of his life; adding, that it would heighten his joy in heaven, to live forever with that excellent man.

The eloquence of Huss was now directed more powerfully than ever against the abuses which abounded in the Church. He inveighed especially against that monstrous system of papal extortion, the sale of indulgences, and the arguments which he employed were far from being displeasing either to the monarch or the people. His conduct gave great offence, however, to the Archbishop, Subinco, who was a violent, bigoted, and illiterate prelate, and who from this period became his irreconcilable enemy. Aware that Huss was attached to the doctrines of Wickliffe, he obtained a decree of the University, condemning as heretical the opinions of the English Reformer, and threatening with the punishment of death, all who should in future

attempt to disseminate them. Huss at once perceived that this decree was levelled at his person, rather than at the doctrines of Wickliffe; but he relied upon the protection of the Queen and on his own unblameable character.

In the mean time, two of Wickliffe's disciples arrived at Prague from England; and Huss having received from them Wickliffe's treatise, *De Realibus Universalibus*, he was so impressed with the truths which it contained, that he adopted the opinions of the author, and became what was called a decided *realist*. The whole University was at this time divided into two parties, the German and Bohemian, or the *nominalists* and *realists*, whose contests were carried on with the greatest animosity. The German or foreign party, consisting of natives of Bavaria, Saxony, and Poland, possessed most influence in the University; they had three votes in all elections and deliberations, while the native Bohemians had but one. The latter complained, not unjustly, of the undue advantages which were enjoyed by foreigners, the more especially as the Germans conducted themselves with great arrogance towards the natives. Huss contested the right of the Germans to this superiority, and

argued, that although at first they had been allowed three votes, while the Bohemians had only one, as the latter were then inconsiderable in point of numbers, yet that, by a recent act of Charles IV. it was declared, that in all matters they should be governed by the constitution of the University of Paris, according to which foreigners had but one vote, and the natives three. These representations in behalf of the Bohemians were not only listened to by Wincseslaus, but that prince decided that the arguments of Huss were well founded, and deprived the Germans of their former privileges ; in consequence of which, nearly the whole of the foreigners withdrew from Prague, and repaired to Leipsic, where a new university was soon after founded. The active part which Huss took in this affair, raised him still higher in the estimation of his countrymen.

Notwithstanding the threats of the Archbishop, Huss continued fearlessly to declaim against the scandalous corruption of morals among the clergy ; and among other doctrines, he strongly recommended a diminution of the superfluous revenues of the Church, as the best means of producing a moral reformation. He even ven-

tured to attack the supreme power of the Pope, in whom he would acknowledge no superiority over other bishops.

No sooner was the conduct of Huss represented to Pope Alexander V. than that Pontiff gave Subinco a commission to take measures for repressing these *dangerous* doctrines! It was on this occasion that the Archbishop issued his injunctions for the destruction of Wickliffe's writings—injunctions which were warmly and resolutely opposed by Huss, who, with the other members of the University, appealed to Gregory XII. one of the three Popes whose schism gave rise to the Council of Constance.* The appeal was received; but the Archbishop, having informed his Holiness that the tenets of the English heretic were fast spreading in Bohemia, obtained an order to prevent the publishing of those errors in his diocese.

In virtue of these instructions, the Archbishop

* A curious anomaly was at this period presented to the adherents of the Romish Church. Three Popes appeared at the same time, each contending for the triple crown, and all laying claim to *infallibility*, yet loading each other with the most fearful anathemas! Gregory XII. at Rimini, John XXIII. at Rome, and Benedict XIII. at Avignon, each of whom had his partisans, who set him up as the successor of St. Peter, and vicar of Jesus Christ upon earth!

directed a criminal process to be raised against four doctors, who had not delivered up copies of Wickliffe's works. Huss and others immediately entered their protests against Subinco's proceedings, and in 1410 appealed anew to Pope John XXIII. at Rome; in consequence of which, Huss was summoned by his Holiness to appear before his tribunal. On the intercession, however, of the King and Queen, several powerful nobles, and the University, he was excused from attending in person; but he sent three deputies to answer to all that should be alleged against him. In the mean time, an event occurred which made the breach between Huss and the Court of Rome utterly irreparable. In 1411, Pope John issued a bull, granting a general indulgence to all who should assist him in his crusade against the King of Naples, whom he had excommunicated. No sooner did the publishers of these indulgences reach Prague, than Huss and his friend Jerome raised their voices against this odious and unscriptural traffic. This was enough; Huss was excommunicated for his contumacy in declining to appear personally before the Papal tribunal, and the town of Prague was laid under an interdict. The number of his

friends would probably have enabled Huss to set the sentence of the Pope at defiance ; but in order to remove every pretext for tumult or disorder, he left Prague, and retired to Hussenitz, his native village, having first committed his cause to " Him who judgeth righteously."*

While in his retirement, Huss continued to disseminate his doctrines by preaching, and composed several treatises, with a view to expose the most objectionable tenets of the Romish Church. One of these pieces, entitled, " The Six Errors," he affixed to the gate of the chapel of Bethlehem ; and in it he particularly directed his attacks against " Indulgences, improper excommunication, believing in the Pope, unlimited obedience to the See of Rome, simony, and making the body of Christ in the mass."

In his other treatises, Huss maintained that the reading of works which were pronounced heretical, could not be absolutely forbidden ;

* In this appeal to God, which was charged on him as a crime, Huss says, " Almighty God, the one only essence in three persons, is the first and last refuge of those who are oppressed. Our Lord Jesus Christ, very God and very man, being desirous to redeem from eternal condemnation, his children, elected before the foundation of the world, has given, by suffering a bloody and ignominious death, this excellent example to his disciples, to commit their cause to the judgment of God."

that the vices of the clergy ought to be publicly reproved ; that the Church consists of those only who are predestinated ; that the Lord Jesus Christ alone is the Head of the Church ; that the Pope and cardinals are no more than members, and that other bishops are the successors of the apostles equally with them ; that no man is obliged to obey the mandates of the Court of Rome, if their commands are opposed to the word of God ; and that the sentence of excommunication, if pronounced unjustly, is of no effect whatever.

While Huss was employed in disseminating these doctrines, a priest of the chapel of St. Michael, in Prague, began to preach against the withholding of the cup from the people in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This opinion having been embraced by Huss and his followers, our Reformer zealously propagated his sentiments, both by writing and preaching. Highly incensed at these proceedings, Archbishop Subinco applied to King Winceslaus for assistance against the promoter of a heresy so pestilential ; but that monarch refused to interfere. Subinco had recourse next to Sigismund, King of Hungary, who promised to repair to Bohemia

without delay, in order to settle the affairs of the Church in that kingdom. The Archbishop, however, died previous to the fulfilment of Sigismund's promise ; and being succeeded by Albicus in the archiepiscopal See of Prague, Huss and his followers were suffered, for some time longer, to disseminate their principles throughout the country without molestation.

SECT. II.

Meeting of the Council of Constance—Huss is summoned to appear before that Assembly—the Emperor grants him a safe-conduct—he is imprisoned—efforts of the Count de Chlum to obtain his release—his dreadful sufferings—violation of the safe-conduct—remonstrance of the Bohemian Nobility in his behalf—declaration of the Emperor—imprisonment of Pope John—firmness of Huss.

FROM the commencement of the Popish hierarchy, numerous ecclesiastical abuses had existed in the Church. These had not only been continued in succeeding ages, but new and still more fearful corruptions were from time to time added to their number, till towards the close of the fourteenth, and at the commencement of the fifteenth centuries, they were increased to an

intolerable magnitude. The schism, in particular, as formerly mentioned, which had taken place in the Popedom, and been continued for nearly forty years, proved the source of many calamities to every kingdom in the Christian world, and was a disgrace to the boasted unanimity and infallibility of the *one Church universal*. The anomaly at this time of three opposing Popes, marshalled in hostile array, each forming plots, and thundering out anathemas, against his competitors, was well calculated to shake the faith of the most rigid devotee of the Papacy; and the call, therefore, for the correction of abuses, and for the restoration of peace in the Church, was loud, and almost universal. To effect these important objects, a General Council was at length assembled at Constance, in the year 1414, to which princes and prelates, clergy and laity, flocked from every part of Europe.*

Having deposed the three existing Popes, and elected Martin V. to fill the chair of St. Peter, the attention of the Council was directed to the

*John Fox, the martyrologist, has given a humorous catalogue of the individuals who appeared at this time in Constance. "There were," says he, "archbishops and bishops 346; abbots and doctors 564; princes, dukes, earls, knights, and squires, 16,000; barbers, 600; musicians, cooks, and jesters, 320," &c.

contests of Huss with the Romish clergy. Huss had been long regarded as a supporter of the tenets of Wickliffe, and an abettor of heresy. In order, therefore, publicly to defend himself against these accusations, he had been previously cited by Pope John XXIII. to appear before the Council—a summons which he cheerfully obeyed, though his mind strongly foreboded that which happened in the issue.* Before his departure, he put up public notices in different places, “that he was going to Constance, and that all who had any objections to him or his doctrines might have an opportunity of stating them there, when he would be ready to meet the charges of all adversaries.” He carried with him not only a safe-conduct from the Emperor, but attestations of orthodoxy and innocence from the University and papal inquisitor at Prague, who affirmed that Huss had never shown the least inclination to impugn any article of the Christian faith. In every town of any extent through which he passed, he had the following paper posted up in some conspicuous place :

* This is evident from a letter which he wrote to a friend immediately before he left Prague, on the outside of which he intreated him not to open it till he should have had certain news of his death.

"John Huss, B. D. is now upon his journey to Constance, there to defend his faith, which, by God's help, he will defend unto death. Willing therefore to satisfy every man who hath ought to object against him, he published in Bohemia, and now doth publish in this noble and imperial city, his said intention. Whoever, therefore, hath any error or heresy to lay to the charge of the said John Huss, be it known unto him, that the said John is ready to answer the same at the approaching Council." The civilities, and even reverence, which he everywhere met with, exceeded all conception. The streets, and sometimes the very roads, were lined with people, so that his journey wore the semblance of a triumph, rather than that of an individual going to stand his trial. He could not help expressing his surprise at the reception he met with. "I thought," said he, "I had been an outcast ; I now see my worst enemies are in Bohemia." He arrived at Constance in November, attended by two noblemen, the Count de Chlum and Baron Lutzunbock, two of his attached friends and followers.

On his arrival, the Pope treated him with kindness, assured him of his protection, and

even removed the sentence of excommunication ; but Stephen Paletz, Professor of Divinity at Prague, and several others of his most violent persecutors, having soon afterwards come to Constance, they used their utmost endeavors to procure his imprisonment and condemnation. Huss appears to have expected that he should have been allowed to preach before the Council, as he had prepared two sermons, in which he proposed to give a complete and connected view of his doctrinal sentiments, as well as to urge the necessity of peace and unity. Had Huss been allowed to preach these sermons, the injustice of his condemnation must have appeared evident, even at that time, to the whole Christian world ; for none of his doctrines could be called heretical. But his enemies dreaded the effect of a developement which must have covered them with ignominy and disgrace ; and though his life was unspotted, yet, contrary both to justice and humanity, they resolved to make him fall a sacrifice to their hatred, with as little permission to state his sentiments, or exhibit his blamelessness, in public, as possible.

Huss was accordingly soon deprived of his liberty, in the following unjustifiable manner.

Paletz and Causis from Prague, having posted up notices through the city of Constance, accusing him of being an excommunicated heretic, Huss naturally enough complained of their lawless proceedings ; but his complaint was dismissed by the Pope, who haughtily replied, " What have I to do in the case ? your own countrymen have done it." The Bishops of Augsburg and Trent soon afterwards came to Huss's lodgings, with a summons from Pope John XXIII. to appear before that Pontiff, in order to clear himself from the charges which had been brought against him. " I had expected," said Huss, " to give an account of myself before the General Council, and not before the Pope and his cardinals ; however, I am willing to lay down my life, rather than to betray the truth." He accordingly immediately repaired, along with his steady friend the Count de Chlum, to the Pope's palace ; but on his arrival he was imprisoned in a dungeon, in the lower part of a tower, attached to a Franciscan monastery in the vicinity of the city. Astonished at such perfidy, Chlum ran instantly to the Pontiff, and demanded an audience, or rather indeed pushed rudely into his presence ; and with great heat of language

remonstrated against so notorious a breach of faith. "Can your Holiness," said he, "deny with your own mouth, that you made me a formal promise, that Huss should remain unmolested at Constance?" Confounded at the sudden appearance and unexpected question of the Count, the Pope sat speechless for some time : at length he brought out by syllables, that it was the act of the cardinals—that he had no hand in the matter—that he could not help it. Perceiving that the Pope would not interfere, the Count left him with indignation, resolving to try his influence with the other members of the Council.

Instead, however, of obtaining any redress for his persecuted friend, the Count de Chlum beheld with horror the fixed resolution of the prelates to increase, rather than to diminish his sufferings. They even resolved to draw up articles against him, and to condemn him in prison. Eight articles were accordingly exhibited against Huss by Causis, and the Pope appointed commissioners to try him. The vexations and insults to which he was now exposed were endless ; and there was this peculiar injustice practised against him, that he was accused of denying

many of the doctrines of the Romish Church which he firmly believed. Every one of Wickliffe's doctrines was affirmed to be maintained by Huss, notwithstanding his own declaration to the contrary. He was accused in particular of denying transubstantiation, a doctrine in which it is to be regretted he believed, and on which he wrote his sentiments while under confinement at Constance. Such indeed was the strength of mind with which he was endowed, that during the same period, he composed several tracts on subjects of practical godliness, commentaries on the Commandments and the Lord's Prayer, and essays on the Knowledge and Love of God, and on the Three Great Enemies of mankind. These were sent to Prague by friends whom he had at Constance, and were highly esteemed by his followers. He vindicated himself with great firmness against the charge of heresy ; but his holy life was unpardonable in the eyes of his enemies, and all those whom the faithfulness of his pastoral services in Bohemia had provoked, now found an opportunity to wreak their vengeance upon him.

Grieved and incensed at the imprisonment of Huss, the Count de Chlum wrote to the Empe-

ror, giving him a full account of all that had been done to his friend. Pretending to feel deeply interested in his behalf, Sigismund immediately sent orders to his ambassadors, to cause Huss to be set at liberty, and even to force the gates of the prison in case of resistance; but the intrigues of the Pope and of the Emperor were too powerful for the sincerity and open dealings of the Bohemian Reformer; and notwithstanding that the honor of Sigismund was pledged, by the safe-conduct which he had granted to him for his protection, Huss was allowed to remain in confinement.

The unwholesome nature of his prison, together with the rigor with which he was treated, soon threw Huss into a violent disorder; and lest he should die previous to his doctrines being condemned, the articles which were already drawn up, together with a citation, were formally sent to the Reformer. The messengers found him stretched upon his pallet, with meekness and patience enduring the heavy affliction which, through the instrumentality of his enemies, lay upon him. Raising himself upon his arm,—his face pale and emaciated, and his eyes sunk and languid,—he said, “ You see my con-

dition. Do I seem like a man fit to defend a cause in a public assembly? Go, and tell your masters what you have seen. But stay," he added, his eyes brightening up with conscious innocence, "tell them, that if they only allow me an advocate, I will not fail, even in this condition, to join issue with them." The messengers made the report; but an old canon forbade any one to defend a heretic; and his request was consequently denied. His condemnation, indeed, had been already resolved on; he was prejudged a heretic before he had obtained one hearing, and their fixed resolution was, that he *must die*.

In the beginning of 1415, the commissioners appointed for the examination of Huss, finding themselves retarded in the execution of their infamous purpose, had the audacity to solicit Sigismund to violate his most solemn engagement. Nor was their suit in vain! To the disgrace of that perfidious prince, he made no hesitation in yielding to their entreaties, easing his conscience with the well known maxim of the Romish Church, that "*no faith was to be kept with heretics*."*

* This open breach of faith on the part of the Emperor cannot

The Council, as will afterwards appear, acted up to the spirit of this infamous principle; and, by their union in perfidy, one of the most upright of men, and eminent servants of the Redeemer, was betrayed and persecuted "even unto death."

Indignant at the conduct of Sigismund, the Bohemian nobility repeatedly remonstrated against his proceedings, and requested, in pretty bold language, that John Huss, who had received a safe-conduct from the monarch himself, and who otherwise would certainly not have repaired to Constance, should be set at liberty, and publicly heard in his defence before the whole Council. But Sigismund excused himself in evasive terms, and thereby drew upon himself the hatred of

be palliated, far less defended, by the most zealous advocates for popery. The authority of Sigismund extended over all the empire; and consequently included Constance, it being an imperial city. By virtue of that authority, the emperor "affectionately recommended the Honorable John Huss. B. D. and A. M. (these are the words of the safe-conduct,) whom he had taken into his protection and safeguard, and into that of the empire, desiring all among whom he should come to receive him well, and entertain him kindly, furnishing him with all necessaries for his despatch and security, whether he goes by land or by water, without taking any thing either from him or his, at coming in or going out, for any sort of duties whatsoever; and to let him *freely and securely pass, sojourn, and RETURN. and for the honor of his Imperial Majesty, if need be, to provide him with good passports!*" The sequel will show how well Sigismund kept the above solemn and explicit engagement.

the Bohemians; which, after the martyr's death, proved highly dangerous to his power.

The Bohemians were equally unsuccessful in a petition which they presented to the Council, in which they reminded that assembly of the safe-conduct that had been granted to Huss, of the flagrant injustice of his imprisonment, while unheard and untried, and urging his liberation, offering whatever security might be demanded for his appearance at his trial. All this sufficiently proves the popularity of Huss, and the value unanimously attached to him by his countrymen, who must be allowed to have been best acquainted both with himself and his doctrines.

In the mean time, as if they had been suspicious of their cause, the Council tried every method to shake the resolution of the Reformer, and make him to retract: but his unaltered steadfastness to the truth gave them no hope of effecting their purpose. Though infirm and harassed, during his confinement in prison, with a variety of vexations, he answered to every particular inquiry and objection; at the same time he uniformly requested to be brought before the Council, that he might at least have the privi-

lege of obtaining a fair hearing. The Pope's officers had hitherto guarded him : but they having been recalled by their master to attend himself, Huss was delivered to the Bishop of Constance, by whose orders he was removed to the castle of Gottleben, beyond the Rhine, where he was loaded with irons, and chained to the floor ;—to so determined a height was the malice of his enemies now raised !

While the opposers of Huss were thus barbarously employed, Pope John, who had hitherto presided at the meetings of the Council, foreseeing the disgrace that was impending over him, fled from Constance by night. The day after the departure of this Pontiff, the Emperor informed the Council that he would “ defend their authority to the last drop of his blood,” and at the same time issued a declaration, that “ the Council should have free powers in all matters of faith, and should be allowed to proceed as judges against all those who were accused of heresy. He likewise acquiesced in the sentiment of a French cardinal, who affirmed that “ a General Council was authorised to depose even a lawful Pope.” Reducing this sentiment to practice, the Council at length proceed-

ed solemnly to depose three existing Popes, and, as we have already seen, to elect another to fill the papal chair.—It is here worthy of remark, that Pope John, the unjust persecutor of Huss, was shortly afterwards brought a prisoner to the castle of Gottleben, and lodged in the same place with the martyr. “Seldom has there been a case,” says Milner, “that in external things the same events often attend the righteous and the wicked. The real difference of condition between the Pope and Huss was *internal*, and ought to be measured by the different frame of their *minds*. The one was harassed with the pangs of disappointed ambition, and had neither the knowledge nor the disposition to console himself with the *Divine promises*; the latter ‘in patience possessed his spirit, and rejoiced in hope of the glory of God.’”

About this time the appearance of Jerome of Prague at Constance, an account of whom will be given in the following chapter, increased the fury of the storm against Huss, and his enemies labored day and night for his destruction. In consequence of the rigor of his confinement, his health and strength decayed, and though his countrymen never ceased to insist on justice

being done to the Reformer, yet all proved of no avail. The Council, to whom Sigismund had perfidiously given up this eminent servant of Christ, "as if conscious of the difficulty of condemning him openly, had recourse to the despicable means of attempting, by repeated insults and vexations, to shake his constancy, and render a public trial unnecessary. He was frequently examined in private. An air of violence and of menace was employed on those occasions, of which we may form some idea from one of the letters of Huss. "Causis," says he, "was there, holding a paper in his hand, and stirring up the Bishop of Constantinople to oblige me to answer distinctly to each article it contained. Every day he is brewing some mischief or other. God, for my sins, has permitted him and Paletz to rise up against me. Causis examines all my letters and words with the air of an inquisitor; and Paletz has written down all the conversation which we had together for many years. I have this day suffered great vexation." The approbation of a good conscience, and the comforting presence of the Spirit of God, appear to have supported this holy man in all his sufferings. He gave his adversaries no advantage over

him either through warmth or timidity ; he refused to give answers in private ; he reserved himself to the public trial which he had always solicited ; he retracted nothing of what he had openly preached, and he possessed his soul in patience and resignation."

SECT. III.

First hearing of Huss before the Council—his second appearance before that Assembly—charges brought against him—disgraceful conduct of the Council—third hearing of Huss—he is remanded to prison—he is harassed during his confinement—his letters—proceedings of the Council.

AFTER Huss had remained upwards of six months in prison, on the 5th of June the Council resolved that the articles objected to him should be produced, and in his absence examined, when, after what they called a *fair hearing*, he should be sent for and condemned. Struck with the iniquity of their proceedings, the Bohemian deputies immediately demanded an audience of the Emperor, and laid before him a full

statement of the conduct of the prelates. Notwithstanding his bigotry, Sigismund was greatly offended at their gross perversion of justice, and sent them a message, commanding them to do nothing, unless the accused was present to answer for himself. This order had the desired effect ; and Huss was summoned to appear before them next day.

The assembly was held in a large cloister belonging to the Franciscans, where a scene of a very extraordinary kind was presented. Scarcely had the first article of charge been read, and a few witnesses brought forward, when a shameful tumult arose among the members. Loud voices were heard from every quarter ; a multitude of questions were asked at the same instant ; reproaches, and language the most opprobrious, resounded from every corner of the house ; in short, the assembly was literally convulsed in one universal uproar. Such was the behavior of the celebrated Council of Constance !! If an interval of less disorder succeeded, and Huss was about to offer any thing in his defence, he was immediately interrupted, with " What avails this ? What is that to the purpose ? " Proceedings so utterly at variance with common de-

cency, and still more with Christianity, filled Huss with astonishment, and looking round he at length exclaimed, "I hoped to have found a different treatment." His rebuke increased the clamor; so that, finding it vain to attempt any farther defence, he held his peace. Some of the members, it is true, endeavored to restore order, but the effort was a hopeless one, and the sederunt was closed in the utmost confusion.

At the meeting of the Council on the day following, the Emperor was present for the purpose of preserving order. As this meeting, the first charge brought against Huss was that of denying the doctrine of transubstantiation,—a charge which he but too well confuted, by showing that he followed the Romish Church in their belief on this point. They next accused him of maintaining the following among other illegal errors of Wickliffe:—"That there is only one universal Church, which is composed of all the elect; that the elect always continue members of Christ's Church, because, although they may sometimes fall into sin, yet they can never finally fall from a state of grace; that St. Peter never was, nor is, the head of the Catholic Church, because this is the peculiar prerogative of

Christ ; that Judas never was a true disciple of Jesus Christ ; and that the condemnation of the forty five articles of Wickliffe was unjust." In these, and several other articles maintained by Wickliffe, Huss acquiesced. With regard, however, to the last of the charges noticed above, he declared, that " he blamed the conduct of the Archbishop Subinco at Prague, only because he had condemned Wickliffe's books without examination, and without distinction ; and added, that most of the doctors of the University of Prague found fault with that prelate, because he produced no reasons from Scripture." " Such were some of the allegations brought against this holy man by the Council of Constance," says a late pious writer, " when he stood on his public trial, as a lily among thorns, or as a sheep in the midst of wolves. How easy is it for a man now to write in defence of these inestimable truths in our happy land ; but with what invincible strength of grace was this adamant saint endued, who bore his explicit, unshaken testimony to the faith, in the presence and hearing of its worst foes, armed with all the terrific powers of this world !"

Huss having mentioned to the Council, that,

being denied justice by Pope John, he had appealed from that Pontiff to Jesus Christ, the assembly treated him with the utmost derision. His judges even doubted whether it was lawful to appeal to Christ ; but Huss with great gravity affirmed, " that it was always lawful to appeal from an inferior to a higher court ; that in this case the judge was infallible, full of equity and compassion, and one who would not refuse justice to the miserable." It would be uninteresting to notice the numerous calumnies which were heaped upon him, and the triumphant answers which he made to them all. The following may serve as a specimen of both : " You one day advised the people," said his accusers, " to take up arms against those who opposed your doctrine." " I one day," replied Huss, " while I was preaching on the Christian armour, described in the sixth chapter to the Ephesians, exhorted my audience to take the sword of the Spirit and the helmet of salvation ; but I expressly admonished them, that I meant the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, and not a material sword."

When the examination was closed, Huss was carried back to prison. As he passed by the Car-

dinal of Cambray, who sat near the Emperor, that prelate stopped him, and said, "I have been informed you have heretofore boasted, that unless you had chosen it yourself, neither the King of Bohemia, nor the Emperor, could have forced you to Constance." "My Lord Cardinal," replied Huss, "if I said any thing of this kind, I said it not in the strong terms in which it hath been represented to you. I might possibly speak gratefully of the kindness of my friends in Bohemia." The Count de Chlum, who was present at the time, with noble firmness, immediately informed the Cardinal, that if what he had heard had been said, it was only the truth. "I am far," said he, "from being a person of the greatest consequence in my own country : others have stronger castles, and more power, than I have ; yet, even I would have ventured to have defended this reverend father a whole year against the utmost efforts of both the princes you have mentioned." The Emperor then turning to Huss, said, "I gave you a safe-conduct, that you might vindicate yourself ; but depend upon it, if you continue obstinate, I will make a fire with my own hands to burn you, rather than

you shall escape.”* To which Huss meekly replied, “I cannot abjure errors I never held, many of which are laid to my charge; and as for those doctrines I have held, if any one will teach me sounder ones, I will instantly renounce them.”

In the third hearing of Huss before the Council, thirty-nine articles, alleged to have been extracted from his writings, were produced against him. Among these were the following: “That there is no absolute need for a visible head of the Church,—that it was governed better in the Apostles’ days without one,—that the title of Holiness is improperly given to man,—that liberty of conscience is every man’s birth-right,—that a wicked Pope cannot be the vicar of Jesus Christ,—that ecclesiastical censures, especially such as touched the life of man, have no foundation in Scripture,—that no excommunication should deter the priest from his duty,—that it is as incumbent on a minister of religion to preach, as for a man of ability to give alms,” &c. These, and several other articles which contained opinions really held by him, Huss readily acknowledged; but with regard to the greater

* See Appendix, No. II.

number, he utterly denied them, declaring that they were either garbled and distorted, or altogether forged by his enemies. In the course of his examination, he spoke severely against the scandalous lives of the clergy,—their simony, luxury, and ignorance, which exasperated the Council, and hastened his doom.

At length the Cardinal of Cambray thus addressed the Reformer: “Your guilt has now been laid before this august assembly, with its full force of evidence. I am obliged, therefore, to take upon me the disagreeable task of informing you, that only this alternative is offered to you; either to abjure these damnable errors, and submit to the Council, in which case these reverend fathers will deal as gently with you as possible, or to abide the consequences.” Huss replied, that he had nothing to add to his former declarations,—that he came there not to defend any opinion obstinately, but with an earnest desire to see his errors and amend them,—that many of the opinions laid to his charge he had never maintained, while those which he had maintained, had not yet been confuted; and that he considered it absurd, on the one hand, to abjure errors which he never held, and, on the

other, nothing should induce him to abjure as errors, doctrines which he believed to be the truths of God.

At the close of the third examination, he was carried back to prison, followed by the Count de Chlum. The devoted attachment of this nobleman to the Reformer was deeply felt and readily acknowledged by the latter. "Oh, what a comfort was it to me," says Huss in one of his letters, "to see that this nobleman did not disdain to stretch out his arm to a poor heretic in irons, whom all the world, as it were, had forsaken." But his enemies soon deprived him of even this consolation, by refusing to permit the Count to enter his prison. Huss was in the mean time loaded with irons, and no one was permitted to see him but such as were formally authorised by the Council.

On the 10th of June, the emperor sent a form of retraction to Huss, which, though it was expressed in ambiguous terms, plainly implied a confession of guilt. Huss refused, therefore, to sign it, stating, that "he would rather be cast into the sea with a millstone about his neck, than give offence to his pious neighbors, by acknowledging that to be true which they know to

be false ; that he had preached patience and constancy to others ; and that he was willing to show an example of these graces, and hoped by Divine assistance to be enabled to do so."

Sigismund now found himself in a dilemma, to get out of which he foresaw would be difficult, if not utterly impossible. His interest engaged him, on the one hand, to appear as the defender of Popery, while his honor, on the other, was pledged to deliver the Reformer from the machinations of his enemies. To ease his conscience, and yet to gain their end in the destruction of Huss, the Council employed all their casuistry ; yet Sigismund felt himself as perplexed as ever. " If he suffered Huss to be put to death, one part of the world would question his honor ; if he interfered with a high hand in preserving him, the other part would question his religion." He had in vain attempted to procure the recantation of Huss by threats in the Council ; and now he endeavored to gain his point by the more effectual methods of persuasion. For this purpose several deputations, consisting of bishops, cardinals, and princes, were sent to the prisoner, who painted to him in glowing colors the wisdom and authority of the Council. " Let them,"

said Huss, "send the meanest person that can convince me, by arguments, from *the word of God*, and I will submit my judgment to him." Even his enemy Paletz, inwardly reverencing his virtue, employed every method which his ingenuity could invent to induce him to retract. But Huss, to whom the very least equivocation was abominable, answered him in these moving terms; "Put yourself in my place; what would you do, if you were now required to retract certain errors, which you were sure you never held." "I own it is a hard case," replied Paletz, with tears in his eyes. Another of his visitors, more unfeelingly than Paletz, told him, "If the Council should inform you that you have but one eye, though you have really two, you would be obliged to agree with that assembly." "While God keeps me in my senses," replied the Reformer, "I would not say such a thing against my conscience, on the entreaty or command of the whole world."

Perceiving that his end was now approaching, Huss employed the little time that was left to him in writing letters to his friends and to his flock, which were privately conveyed by the Bohemian lords, and publicly read in Bethlehem

Chapel, in Prague, once the delightful scene of his ministry. As a specimen of his own firmness and piety, and of his earnest desire for the welfare of his beloved people, the following extract is given from one of his letters, which has been styled not unappropriately, "a farewell sermon to his flock." "My dear friends, let me take this last opportunity of exhorting you to trust in nothing here, but to give yourselves up entirely to the service of God. Well am I authorised to warn you not to trust in princes, nor in any child of man, for there is no hope in them. God only remaineth steadfast; what he promises, he will undoubtedly perform. For myself, on his gracious promise I rest. Having endeavored to be his faithful servant, I fear not being deserted by him. 'Where I am,' says the gracious Promiser, 'there shall my servants be.' May the God of heaven preserve you. This is probably the last letter I shall be enabled to write. I have reason to believe I shall be called on tomorrow to answer with my life. Sigismund has in all things acted deceitfully. I pray God to forgive him; you have heard in what severe language he has spoken of me." In one of his private letters to a friend, he says, "I am far from the

strength and zeal of the apostle Peter. Jesus Christ has not given me his talents : besides, I have more violent conflicts, and a greater number of shocks to sustain. I say, therefore, that, placing all my confidence in Jesus Christ, I am determined, when I hear my sentence, to continue steadfast in the truth even unto death."

In another letter is contained the following remarkable passages : " Almighty God will confirm the hearts of his faithful people, whom he hath chosen before the foundation of the world, that they may receive the eternal crown of glory. I am greatly comforted with those words of our Saviour, ' Happy are ye when men shall hate you, and shall separate you from their company,' &c. O precious consolatory lesson ! difficult, indeed, not to understand, but to practise in time of tribulation. Let patience have her perfect work. It is a light matter to speak of patience, but a great matter to fulfil it. Our most patient Champion himself, who knew that he should rise again the third day, and redeem from everlasting condemnation all his elect, was troubled in spirit. Yet he, though sorely troubled, said to his disciples, ' Let not your hearts be troubled.' I trust steadfastly, that the Lord will

make me a partaker of the crown with you, and with all them who love the Lord Jesus Christ. Merciful Saviour! draw us, weak creatures, after thee; for, except thou draw us, we are not able to follow thee. Give us a courageous spirit, that it may be ready; for without thee we can do nothing. Give us an upright faith, a firm hope, and perfect charity."

Such was the perfidy of the enemies of Huss, that they had determined beforehand the treatment he should receive, in the event of their menaces inducing him to retract. He was to be degraded from the priesthood forever, and enclosed during life between four walls! Such was the mercy the Council of Constance had in reserve for those who submitted to their authority! such the only reward intended to be bestowed on Huss, had they succeeded in getting him to wound his conscience in order to gratify them!

As a preparatory step to the condemnation of Huss, the Council, having prohibited the cup in the Lord's supper to be given to the laity, next ordered the works of the Reformer to be burnt. In reference to this circumstance, Huss wrote to his friends in the following terms: "That he

was not discouraged on this account; that Jeremiah's books met with the same treatment; nevertheless, the Jews suffered the calamities which that faithful prophet had foretold. Consider that they have condemned the Pope, their god upon earth, for his crimes; particularly for selling indulgences, bishoprics, and the like. But in this they are his accomplices. The Bishop of Litomissel, who is at the Council, went twice to buy the Archbishopric of Prague, but others outbade him. They follow this traffic even at Constance, where one sells and another buys a benefice."

Though the time given to Huss for consideration had expired, yet he received another deputation from the Council in private, who used every effort to induce him to recant. His resolution, however, could not be shaken; but while he persisted in his integrity, he again promised to retract every error that should be proved against him from the word of God. His steady friend, the Count de Chlum, with a simplicity and honesty that presents a striking contrast to the subtilty and artifices of the priests and prelates, said to him, "My dear Huss, I am a man of no learning, and unfit to advise so

learned a person as you. If you are convinced of any error, I venture, however, to advise you to retract it; if not, to endure whatever punishment shall be inflicted on you, rather than do violence to your conscience." Huss answered with tears, that he called God to witness how ready he was to retract sincerely, and upon oath, any error, the moment he should be convinced it was such by the testimony of the Scriptures of truth. To which one of the Bishops insultingly replied, "See how obstinate he is in his errors!"

SECT. IV.

The last appearance of Huss before the Council—Bishop of Lodi's sermon—noble conduct of Huss—he is degraded from the priesthood—is cruelly insulted—sentence of death passed on him—his execution—causes of his ill treatment—his character.

On the 7th of July, Huss was brought before the 15th session of the Council, in presence of the Emperor, the princes of the empire, and an immense assembly of people. The Bishop of Lodi preached a sermon from these words of the Apostle Paul, "That the body of sin might be

destroyed ;" which, with ignorance equalled only by his malignity, he applied to the Reformer, urging the Council to cut him off as an obstinate heretic. " Destroy all errors and heresies," said he, addressing himself to Sigismund, " and especially that obstinate one (pointing to Huss) before you ; for by his wickedness and mischief many places of the world are infected with most pestilent and heretical poison, and almost utterly subverted and destroyed. And then your praises will be celebrated for evermore, for having overthrown such and so great enemies of the faith."

While they were reading the articles extracted, or pretended to be extracted, from his writings, Huss was beginning to answer to each distinctly ; but he was informed that he might answer to them all at once, and was ordered at present to be silent. In vain he expostulated against the unreasonableness of this injunction ; upon which, lifting his hands to heaven, he begged the Council, in God's name, to indulge him with the freedom of speech, that he might justify himself before the people, " after which," said he, " you may dispose of me as you think proper." Persisting, however, in their refusal,

Huss kneeled down, and, raising his eyes and hands to heaven, with a loud voice he recommended his cause to Him who judgeth righteously. Being again upbraided with his appeal to Christ, "Behold," said he, with uplifted hands, "most gracious Saviour, how the Council condemns as an error what thou hast prescribed and practised, when, overborne by enemies, thou committedst thy cause to God thy Father, leaving us this example, that when we are oppressed, we may have recourse to the judgment of God. Yes," continued he, turning towards the assembly, "I have maintained, and do still maintain, that an appeal made to Jesus Christ is most just and right, because He can neither be corrupted by bribes, nor be deceived by false witnesses, nor be overreached by any artifice. I came voluntarily to this Council, under the faith of the Emperor here present." In pronouncing these last words, he fixed his eyes on Sigismund, who blushed, as he well might, at this sudden and unexpected rebuke.

The final sentence of the Council was now pronounced,—that the writings of Huss should be publicly burnt; and that he himself, as an incorrigible heretic, who openly taught, and re-

fused to retract doctrines which had long been condemned as dangerous to the Roman Catholic faith, should be deprived of his ecclesiastical dignity, and delivered over for punishment to the temporal arm. Huss, who was obliged to listen on his knees while this sentence was publicly read, repeatedly attempted to speak, in order to vindicate himself in regard to several offences which were falsely laid to his charge; but he was always interrupted, and compelled to keep silence. Seven bishops, commissioned for that purpose, then clothed him in priest's garments, and put a chalice into his hand; upon which Huss said, "The Jews put a purple robe upon our Lord to mock him, when Herod delivered him to Pilate." When he was fully apparelled, the Council once more exhorted him to retract; but finding him immoveable, one of the bishops uttered these words, "O cursed Judas, who, having forsaken the council of peace, art entered into that of the Jews, we take this chalice from thee, in which is the blood of Jesus Christ." "I trust, in the mercy of God," replied the martyr, "that I shall drink of it this very day in his kingdom." Each bishop then tore off a part of his vestments, uttering a curse, in

token of his being stripped of his office and cursed of God. Having completed his degradation, by the performance of several of their absurd ceremonies and cruel insults, they placed on his head a paper coronet, on which they had painted three figures of devils, with this inscription, ARCH-HERETIC, saying, "We devote thy soul to the infernal devils." "But I commit my soul," replied Huss, "into thy hands, O Lord Jesus; unto thee I commend my spirit, which thou hast redeemed. And I am glad," he added, "to wear this crown of ignominy, for the love of him who wore a crown of thorns." The Council now ordered this formal sentence to be pronounced: "The Holy Synod of Constance declares, that John Huss ought to be given up to the secular power, and does accordingly so give him up, considering that the Church of God has no more to do with him!"

Having been doomed to the flames by the Emperor, his execution was committed to the Elector Palatine, who ordered him to be escorted to the place appointed, by a guard of eight hundred men. Walking amidst his guards, the martyr declared his innocence to the people. Having been compelled to witness the public

burning of his writings in the square in front of the episcopal palace, he was conducted to the city gates, where preparations were made for his execution. When he drew near the spot, he kneeled down, and prayed with such fervor, that some of the people said aloud, "What this man has done before, we know not; but now we hear him offer up most excellent prayers to God." The Elector would not suffer him, however, to address the people, and gave orders that he should be burnt. "Lord Jesus," said Huss, "I humbly suffer this cruel death for thy sake; and I pray thee to forgive all my enemies." His paper crown having fallen from off his head, the soldiers put it on again, saying, that he must be burnt with the devils whom he had served. He was then tied to the stake with wet cords, a chain was fastened round his body, and the wood piled around him. Looking with a smiling countenance on the dreadful apparatus for his death, the holy man said, "My Lord Jesus was bound with a harder chain than this, for my sake; and why should I be ashamed of this old rusty one?" Before the fire was kindled, the Elector once more exhorted him to retract. "I have no errors," replied the martyr,

"to retract. I endeavored to preach Christ with plainness ; and what I have written and taught was in order to rescue souls from the power of the devil, and to deliver them from the tyranny of sin ; I now, therefore, do gladly seal what I have written and taught, with my blood."

The Elector having withdrawn, the faggots were kindled, and Huss having committed his soul into the hands of God, commenced singing a hymn with a voice so loud and cheerful, that he was distinctly heard amidst the crackling of the combustibles, and the noise of the multitude. At length his voice was cut short, after he had uttered these words, " Jesus Christ, thou Son of the living God, have mercy on me !" When the fire abated, his body appeared, half consumed, hanging over the chain, which, together with the post to which he was fastened, and the clothes he formerly wore, were thrown into the flames. The malice of his enemies pursued his very remains. His ashes were carefully collected, and cast into the Rhine, that the very earth might not feel the load of such enormous guilt !

Such was the end of John Huss, whose martyrdom fixes an indelible stain, not only on the Council of Constance, but on the Roman Cath-

olic Church in general. For to the members of that corrupt body, at the present day, may justly be applied the words of Christ to the lawyers, "Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers." The infamous doctrine, "that no faith is to be kept with heretics," the modern Romanists indeed would have us to believe is not a tenet of their Church; but if that Church be *infallible*, and if the highest authority in it be a *General Council* in which the Pope presided, then no doctrine avowed and acted on, in such circumstances, can ever be exploded by the advocates of Rome. The truth is evident, that from the very beginning of the reign of the man of sin, the Popish Church has been the persecutor of the saints, and till the period when that iniquitous system shall fall before the "glory of the Lord, and the brightness of his coming," he will continue, in one form or another, to make war with the true people of God.

That Huss was one of those "of whom the world was not worthy," must be evident to every candid reader; yet the united efforts of a Church which calls itself Christian, were employed "to take away his life from the earth." He could not be proved to have held any point

of doctrine absolutely distinct from the creed of his adversaries. He acknowledged the Pope, believed in transubstantiation, allowed the adoration of saints, and practised confession,—yet, strange as it may appear, *Roman Catholics* were his betrayers and murderers! But Huss was a true disciple of Christ, and, according to the light he had received, preached the gospel of the grace of God faithfully to the people. The natural depravity of man, and the necessity of Divine influence to renew the heart, were doctrines of which he never lost sight. He also adhered to the Scriptural account of faith, and contended, that saving faith necessarily produces love and obedience in all who are possessed of it: and in the administration of the Lord's supper, he affirmed, that the people as well as the priests had a right to partake of the cup. He declaimed, besides, against the usurpations of the Roman See, and the temporalities of the clergy. The native tendency of all his doctrines, indeed, was to emancipate the people from the bondage in which they had been long held by an anti-christian priesthood, by leading them to the word of God. He never spared iniquity or profligacy in the clergy, while his own

holy and self-denied life formed a striking contrast to the impious conduct of the ecclesiastics in general. Hence it was that the Council, who dreaded the effects of his eloquence and example, were glad to have recourse to an accusation of heresy, as the best and least unpopular means of destroying the enemy of their corruptions, and of crushing those principles which appeared subversive of their privileges and pretensions.

Though the talents of Huss appear not to have been of the first order, yet they certainly were much above mediocrity. His writings are characterized by so much good sense, that Luther calls him the most rational expounder of Scripture he had ever met with. His natural temper was mild and condescending, and the events of his life prove him to have possessed an exquisite tenderness of conscience, together with great piety, and almost unexampled fortitude.

A noble testimony to his character was transmitted to the Council of Constance, toward the end of 1415, signed by above sixty barons and noblemen of Bohemia. "We know not," they say, "from what motives you have con-

demned John Huss, Bachelor of Divinity, and preacher of the gospel. You have put him to a cruel and ignominious death, though convicted of no heresy. We wrote in his vindication to Sigismund, King of the Romans. This apology of ours ought to have been communicated to your congregations ; but we have been told that you burned it in contempt of us. We protest with the heart as well as with the lips, that Huss was honest, just, and orthodox ; that for many years, he conversed among us with godly and blameless manners ; that during all these years, he explained to us and to our subjects the gospel, and the books of the Old and New Testaments, according to the exposition of holy doctors approved by the Church ; and that he has left writings behind him, in which he constantly abhors all heresy. He taught us to detest every thing heretical. In his discourses he constantly exhorted us to the practice of peace and charity, and his own life exhibited to us a distinguished example of these virtues. After all the inquiry which we have made, we can find no blame attached to the doctrine or to the life of the said John Huss ; but, on the contrary, every thing pious, laudable, and worthy of a true pastor."

Nor did the Bohemians consider even this disinterested and noble defence of their persecuted countryman sufficient. To preserve his memory, the 7th of July was for many years observed by them ; on which a service adapted to the day was appointed to be read in all the churches, and an oration was pronounced in commemoration of the noble stand which he made against ecclesiastical tyranny. In some places, large fires were kindled on the mountains in memory of his sufferings, round which the country people used to assemble and sing hymns.

To these testimonies from the friends of Huss, as to the purity of his life, and the injustice of his persecutors, may be added other two from the pens of his enemies. A Bohemian Jesuit, says Mosheim, who was far from being favorable to the Reformer, and who had the best opportunity of becoming acquainted with his real character, gave the following description of him : “ He was more subtle than eloquent ; but the gravity and austerity of his manners, his frugal and exemplary life, his pale and meagre countenance, his sweetness of temper, and his uncommon affability towards persons of all ranks and

conditions, from the highest to the lowest, were much more persuasive than any eloquence could be."

Another eminent Roman Catholic writer, *Æneas Sylvius*, bears the following testimony to his magnanimous and triumphant death : " Huss and Jerome," says he, " went to the stake as to a banquet. Not a word fell from them that discovered the least timidity. They sang hymns in the flames, without ceasing, to the very last."

CHAP. III.

JEROME OF PRAGUE.

SECT. I.

Earliest accounts given us of Jerome—his great literary attainments—he co-operates with Huss in endeavoring to effect a Reformation—promises to follow Huss to Constance—his arrival in that city—he is arrested and brought before a General Congregation—disgraceful proceedings of that Assembly—amiable and upright manner of the Reformer—he is subjected to the most barbarous cruelties—Remonstrance of the Bohemian Lords—Jerome retracts.

ECCLESIASTICAL historians have almost uniformly associated the name of Jerome of Prague with that of John Huss. This is to be accounted for, not simply from their both having been condemned to the flames by the same Council, and nearly about the same time; but from the history of the one being closely connected with that of the other. Jerome was the intimate companion as well as the co-martyr of Huss; and though he was inferior to the latter Reformer, in age, experience, and authority, yet he

was generally esteemed his superior in polite and liberal endowments.

Jerome was a native of Prague, and received his education at the University of that city. Being possessed of very superior talents, he was soon admitted Master of Arts, but was not connected with the priesthood ; from which circumstance, he is sometimes styled the lay Reformer. He was the early companion of Huss, and vigorously seconded all his endeavors to promote a reformation among his countrymen. Being fond of travelling, he visited most of the states of Europe, and was every where so much admired for his happy elocution, which gave him great advantages in the schools, that the Universities of Paris, Cologne, and Heidelberg, imitating the example of that of Prague, conferred upon him the degree of Master of Arts. Having at length travelled into England, with the intention of farther prosecuting his studies, he became acquainted with the writings of Wickliffe, and on his return to his own country, he carried several of that Reformer's works along with him. These, in conjunction with Huss, he translated into his native language, and industriously circulated in Bohemia ; and though prevented from publicly

preaching the same doctrines to his countrymen, he labored privately, with great success, in endeavoring to open their eyes to many of the corruptions of the Romish priesthood.

The popularity of Jerome, together with the vigorous support which he gave to Huss in that Reformer's attempts to enlighten the people, alarmed the Council of Constance. That assembly consequently kept a watchful eye on all his proceedings, and considered him one of the most dangerous enemies of the Papal hierarchy.

On Huss being called to appear before the Council, Jerome not only exhorted him to maintain with steadfastness those doctrines which he had taught, but promised, if he was oppressed, to follow him to Constance, and give him all the support in his power. Fearing, however, that the Council would treat him in the same unjust manner as they had done himself, Huss endeavored to prevent him from fulfilling his promise, and in one of his letters expressly desired a friend to caution Jerome against ever appearing in Constance. Regarding, however, the welfare of his companion more than his own safety, Jerome had the generosity to lend a deaf ear to the entreaties of Huss, and entered that city on

the 4th of April, 1415. But hearing of the unfair treatment which Huss had experienced, convinced that he could be of no service to his friend, and learning for the first time that secret machinations were carrying on against himself, he retired to Uberlingen, and wrote to the Emperor for a safe-conduct, professing his readiness to appear before the Council if he obtained this security. His request being refused, Jerome published a paper, in which he declared it to be his intention to return to Constance, for the purpose of defending his character and doctrine, both of which, he had learned, had been exceedingly defamed; and promised, that, if any error should be proved against him, he would with great readiness retract it. He requested, however, that the faith of the Council might be given for his security, and concluded with earnestly beseeching that so reasonable a demand might not be denied: "For if I am put in prison," said he, "and violence is used against me before I am convicted, the Council will manifest to the whole world their injustice by such a proceeding."

Having received no satisfactory answer to his paper, Jerome resolved to return to his own

country. After his departure from Constance, he was summoned to appear before the Council, and a pretended safe-conduct or passport was despatched to him, "which promised him, indeed, all manner of security; but it contained such a salvo to justice and the interests of the faith, as rendered it, in effect, a mere nullity." It gave him, in short, a permission to go to Constance, but not to return. It was no wonder, therefore, that Jerome refused to receive a passport like this, which afforded him in reality no manner of security whatever; but as to the citation for his appearance, he protested, on his first examination, that it had never reached his hands.

Being utterly ignorant of the summons, therefore, Jerome was proceeding on his journey to Bohemia, when, by the treachery and subtilty of his enemies, he was arrested at Hirsaw, and led back to Constance, loaded with irons.* He was immediately brought before a general congrega-

* A Popish historian gives the following account of the manner in which Jerome was arrested; but though there is nothing improbable in the story, other writers treat it as fable. "At a village upon the borders of the black forest," says he, "Jerome fell accidentally in company with some priests. The conversation turning upon the Council of Constance, Jerome grew warm; and among other severe things, called that assembly *the school of the devil*, and a *synagogue of iniquity*. The priests, scandal-

tion, which appears to have been assembled for the express purpose of insulting and ensnaring their unoffending prisoner. In the midst of his examination, one of the bishops asked him, Why he fled from Uberlingen? and why he refused to obey the summons of the Council? "Because," answered Jerome, "I was not allowed a safe-conduct either from the Emperor or the Council; and perceiving that I had many enemies in that assembly, I did not think it proper to be the author of my own destruction; notwithstanding, however, if I had known of the citation, I would have returned instantly, though I had been actually on the confines of Bohemia." This mild answer was followed by the most disgraceful uproar in the assembly, every one venting his rage with more clamor than another against the Reformer. "Every mouth opened at once against Jerome," says Gilpin, "and the impartial spectator saw rather the representation of the baiting of a wild beast, than of a wise assembly, investigating truth, and dispensing justice." When order was restored, Gerson, who had formerly known Jerome in
ized at this language, gave immediate information of it to the chief magistrates of the place, who arrested Jerome, and put him into the hands of the Duke of Sultzbach."

France, and who discovered much acrimony towards *both* the Bohemian Reformers, reproached him for having formerly given much offence to the University of Paris, by introducing several erroneous propositions. With great spirit, Jerome answered, that it was hard to have opinions objected to him of so long a date; that it was well known, that the disputations of young students were considered rather as the exercise of genius, than as strict disquisitions of truth; and that no exceptions had been made at the time to the opinions which he had maintained. "As I was admitted Master of Arts," said he, "I used the liberty of discussion allowed to philosophers; nor was I then charged with any error: I am still ready to maintain what I advanced at that time, if I am allowed; and also to retract, if I be convicted of mistake."

Many other false accusations were laid to his charge, which he answered with the utmost promptitude and self-command. Several of the governors of the Universities of Cologne and Heidelberg, made heavy complaints of the heresies which he had maintained in each of these places. One doctor in particular from the former seminary said, "You vented several errors

in our University." "Be pleased to name one," replied Jerome. This unexpected demand put his accuser to a stand, and he pretended that his memory had failed him. "You advanced most impious heresies among us," said another doctor from Heidelberg; "I remember one particularly concerning the Trinity. You declared that it resembled water, snow, and ice." To this Jerome answered, that he still persisted in his opinions, although by some they might be esteemed impious or heretical; but at the same time, he avowed his readiness to retract with humility and pleasure whatever they convinced him was an error.

Notwithstanding the humble and upright manner of the Reformer, the assembly, instead of affording him an opportunity either for explanation or defence, was inflamed with rage against him; and in the midst of the confusion which followed, a multitude of voices were heard to exclaim, "Away with him, away with him; to the fire, to the fire!" Amazed at this indecent and outrageous scene, Jerome looked round the assembly with a steady and most significant countenance; and, after waiting till he could be heard, cried aloud, "Since nothing but my blood will satisfy

you, I am resigned to the will of God." The Archbishop of Saltzburg, with sufficient adroitness, but grossly perverting the words of Scripture, immediately replied, "No, Jerome, God hath no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he turn from his way and live."

Jerome was now carried back to prison, and immured in a dungeon. While sitting in his dismal cell, ruminating upon his approaching fate, a voice struck his ear, addressing him in the following words: "Be constant, Jerome, and fear not to suffer death for the truth's sake, which, when you was at liberty, you preached with so much boldness and success." Looking up to a dark window, whence the voice seemed to proceed, Jerome cried out, "Whoever thou art, who deignest to comfort an abject man, I give thee thanks for thy kind office. I have indeed lived defending what I thought the truth: the harder task yet remains, to die for its sake; but God, I hope, will support me against flesh and blood." This conversation alarmed the guard, who, having discovered the offender, immediately informed the prelates of what had taken place.

A pretext was now afforded to the enemies of

Jerome, for inflicting on him cruelties still more severe. In a few hours afterwards, accordingly, the Archbishop of Riga caused him to be conveyed privately to St. Paul's church, where he was bound to a post, with his hands chained to his neck. For the space of ten days he remained in this agonizing posture, with his head hanging on his breast, and without any aliment but bread and water. During all this time his friends were entirely ignorant of his situation, and had they not been at length made acquainted with it, by one of the prison-attendants, he must have remained for a much longer period, without experiencing any mitigation of his sufferings. Though, however, they procured for him better nourishment, yet the cruel treatment which he had received brought on him a dangerous illness; when, fearing that this life would be cut short previous to executing on him the sentence which they had resolved to pass, his enemies gave orders to abate somewhat of the rigor of his treatment; but they refused to permit him to leave the prison.

The unjust proceedings of the Council of Constance towards Huss and Jerome, exceedingly displeased the Bohemian nobility. They had

strenuously exerted themselves, as already noticed, to prevent the condemnation of Huss. But finding their petition rejected, they renewed their application concerning Jerome, and in language which, if any thing would have overawed the Council, must have deterred that assembly from sacrificing another innocent person to their resentment. "Ye have not only disgraced us by the condemnation of Huss," said they, "but have also unmercifully imprisoned, and perhaps already put to death, Jerome of Prague, a man of most profound learning and copious eloquence. Him also ye have condemned unconvicted. Notwithstanding all that hath passed, *we are resolved to sacrifice our lives for the defence of the gospel of Christ, and of his faithful preachers.*"

Startled at the expostulations and threatenings of the Bohemian lords, and at the same time determined to maintain their own usurped authority, the Council labored hard to induce Jerome to retract his sentiments. Nor is it difficult to perceive their motives in so anxiously endeavoring to effect this point. For not only were they aware of the watchful eye which was kept upon them by the Bohemian nobility, who were deter-

mined to avenge so cruel an insult offered to their country, but they were anxious to prevent the infamy which would unavoidably be connected with their illegal execution of another great and good man.

The unwearied efforts of the Council at length proved successful. Jerome had withstood the simple fear of death; but to endure imprisonment, chains, hunger, sickness, and even torture, through a succession of many months, was too great a trial for human nature. The 11th of September was the first day on which he gave his judges hope of his recantation. He then began to waver, and talked obscurely of his having misunderstood the tendency of some of the tenets of Huss. Promises and threatenings were now redoubled upon him; and the 20th of that month was appointed for a more ample confession of his heresies. His enemies visited him the night previous, in order to ascertain the state of his mind; but, finding that he was not yet brought to proper flexibility, another day was appointed. That fatal day was the 23d, when he read aloud an ample recantation of all the opinions he had maintained, couched in language dictated by the Council.

In this paper, he anathematized the articles both of Wickliffe and of Huss, and declared that he believed every thing which the Council believed. He professed in particular, that he would follow the doctrines of the Romish Church, in regard to "the keys, the sacraments, the orders, the offices, and the censures of the Apostolic See; as also concerning indulgences, the relics of saints, ecclesiastical liberty, and the ceremonies." "Thus was disgraced," says Milner, "before all the world, and humbled in his own eyes, a man of most excellent morals, of superior parts, and of great learning and fortitude." Yet, "the power and the mercy of God, in owning his fallen servant, and in afterwards restoring and supporting him, were magnified, in this instance, in a very striking manner." His fall, however, furnishes every professed disciple of Christ with a lesson the most important. Even good men are sometimes ready to put too much confidence in their own strength, and to imagine that they are able to overcome the strongest temptations; but when the hour of trial arrives, their strength fails, and they are terrified into the commission of the very evil to which, when it was at a distance, they imagined death itself

could not have forced them to yield. How necessary, then, the exhortation of the Apostle, "Be not high-minded, but fear," lest, when we "think we stand, we also should fall."

SECT. II.

Jerome repents of his weakness, and resumes his steadfastness in defending the truth—the Council resolve, most unjustly, to try him a second time—admirable spirit of the Reformer—his answers to the charges which were brought against him—his farther examination—his eloquent speech—proceedings of the Council—Jerome is condemned—his execution—his sentiments—testimony of Poggius to his abilities, fortitude, and eloquence.

THE triumph of the enemies of Jerome was, like that of all the wicked, "but for a moment." No sooner had he yielded to their solicitations and threatenings, than he repented of his sin and weakness, and bitterly mourned over his fall. Having acted against the dictates of his own conscience, he left the Council with a heavy heart, and when conveyed back to prison, his own reflections rendered the solitude of that dreary abode far more gloomy than he had hitherto ex-

perienced. But though cast down, Jerome was not an apostate ; and having received strength from above, he was enabled to resume his courage in vindicating the truth, and at last to seal his testimony with his blood.

Instead of Jerome's retractation procuring his release, his confinement in prison was as close and severe as ever. The Council, besides, not satisfied with what they had already extorted from him, resolved most unjustly to try him a second time. There were indeed a few voices in that assembly which were raised against these unrighteous proceedings. The cardinals of Cambray and Florence, in particular, whether from motives of justice, or policy only, cannot now be ascertained, loudly exclaimed against bringing Jerome to a second trial. " He hath submitted," said they, " to the Council ; he hath acknowledged his errors in particular, as well as in general : what can we expect more ? Hitherto we have acted with credit : let us stop here, and not suffer an intemperate zeal for truth to carry us beyond the bounds of justice." The endeavors of these cardinals, however, were utterly ineffectual. A torrent of bigotry and

zeal bore down all opposition, and they were at length compelled to give way to it.

Jerome was accordingly brought before the Council on the 23d of May, 1416, when the former articles of charge, together with a number of others, collected in Bohemia by certain Carmelite friars, were produced against him. He refused, however, to be sworn, because they denied him the liberty of defence. After calmly witnessing their iniquitous proceedings, and patiently hearing their unfounded accusations, Jerome exclaimed, "How unjust is it that ye will not hear me! Ye have confined me three hundred and forty days, in several prisons, where I have been cramped with irons, almost poisoned with dirt and stench, and pinched with the want of all necessaries. During this time, ye always gave to my enemies a hearing, but refused to hear me so much as a single hour. I wonder not, that since ye have granted them so long and so favorable an audience, they should have had the address to persuade you that I am an heretic, an enemy to the faith, a persecutor of the clergy, and a villain. Thus prejudiced, ye have judged me unheard, and ye still refuse to hear me. Remember, however, ye are but men,

and as such ye are fallible, and may suffer others to impose on you. It is said that all learning and wisdom is collected in this Council. The more, then, does it behove you to take heed that ye act not rashly, lest ye should act unjustly. I know that it is the design of this Council to inflict sentence of death upon me. But when all is done, I am an object of small importance, who must die sooner or later. Therefore, what I say is more for your sakes than my own. It ill becomes the wisdom of so many great men to pass an unjust decree against me, and by this to establish a precedent for consequences much more pernicious than my death can be."

This reasoning of Jerome so far moved the Council, that they resolved, after he had answered to the articles of accusation, to grant him liberty of speech. All the articles were then read to him, among which were the following :—His adherence to the errors of Wickliffe,—his having had a picture of that heretic in his chamber, arrayed in the common ornaments of a saint,—his counterfeiting the seal of the University of Oxford in favor of Wickliffe,—his despising the authority of the Church, after excommunication,—and his denial of transubstantiation.

The answers of Jerome to each of these articles, with others of minor importance, were given with so much firmness and modesty as to astonish every individual present. "He scrupled not to own," he said, "that he thought well of Wickliffe and of his doctrines, but that he thought him infallible, as seemed to be insinuated, was false; that many of his writings he had never seen, and that he could not subscribe in all points to those he had, but that in general he believed many errors had been laid to his charge of which he was innocent, for the English Reformer was too wise a man to be the author of the gross absurdities with which his enemies had falsely accused him. With regard to his having had a picture of Wickliffe in his possession, he acknowledged it to be the case, and that he had the pictures of many other learned men; but that he did not remember of Wickliffe's portrait being dressed in any saint-like ornament. As to the charge of his having counterfeited the seal of the University of Oxford, he had seen, he said, a testimonial, under that seal, in favor of Wickliffe, which he had been led to believe was authentic: he owned, also, that he had read it publicly; but as to his

having counterfeited either the seal or the instrument, he was totally innocent of the charge, —and it rested upon his opponents to prove the allegation. He solemnly declared that he had never despised the authority of the Church ; on the contrary, he could prove that he had used every probable method in his power to be reconciled to it. And lastly, that he had never, either in conversation or in writing, opposed the doctrine of transubstantiation."

Having thus proved his innocence, Jerome, with great emotion, declared before the whole assembly, that the fear of death alone had induced him to retract opinions which from his heart he maintained ; and that he had done injustice to the memory of those two excellent men, John Wickliffe and John Huss, whose examples he revered, and in the belief of whose doctrine he was determined to die.

Unable to refute him, several of the prelates upbraided him with the grossest calumnies ; upon which, Jerome, rising up, and stretching out his hands, in a mournful voice exclaimed, " Which way, fathers, shall I turn ? whom shall I call upon for help, or to bear witness to my innocence ? Shall I make my address to you ?

But my persecutors have entirely alienated your minds from me, by saying that I myself am a persecutor of my judges. If ye give them credit, I have nothing to hope for." After some reasoning among themselves, the Council, finding it to be impossible to bring the matter to a conclusion at that sederunt, adjourned the court till another day.

On the 26th, he was again brought before the Council, when the remaining articles of charge were read over to him. After he had answered the whole of them, owning some, denying others, and clearing the rest from the false interpretations which had been put upon them,—his judges informed him, that though he had been clearly convicted of heresy, yet they gave him liberty to speak, but warned him, that if he persisted in his errors, he must expect judgment without mercy.

Having obtained this liberty, Jerome determined to embrace an opportunity of vindicating his doctrines, and bearing witness to the truth, which might never again recur. After fervently praying that God would govern his heart and his lips, he commenced an eloquent and impressive speech in the following words: "I am not

ignorant that many excellent men have been borne down by false witnesses, and unjustly condemned. Moses was often scandalized by his brethren. Joseph was sold through envy, and afterwards imprisoned upon false reports. Isaiah, Daniel, and almost all the prophets, were unjustly persecuted. And were not John the Baptist, Jesus Christ himself, and most of his apostles, put to death as ungodly, seditious persons? In other books as well as the Bible, we have similar instances. Socrates was most unjustly condemned by his countrymen: he might, indeed, have saved his life by doing violence to his conscience, but he preferred death to a disingenuous recantation. Plato, Anaxagoras, Zeno, and many others, were maltreated in various ways.—It is a shameful thing for one priest to be unjustly condemned by another; but the height of iniquity is, when this is done by a Council, and a college of priests." He next gave so probable an account of the reason of the malice of his adversaries, that for some moments he seemed to have convinced his judges. "I came here of my own accord," said he, "to justify myself, which a man conscious of guilt would scarcely have done. Those who know

the course of my life and studies, know that my time has been spent in exercises and works of a different tendency from any thing wicked or heretical. As to my sentiments, the most learned men of all times have had different opinions concerning religion : they disputed about it, not to combat the truth, but to illustrate it. St. Augustine, and his contemporary St. Jerome, were not always of the same opinion, yet were not on that account accused of heresy. I shall make no apology for my sentiments, because I am not conscious of maintaining any error, nor shall I retract, because it becomes not me to retract the false accusations of my enemies."

Having vindicated the innocence of John Huss, and declared that he was ready to suffer after his example, Jerome plainly told the Council, that he hoped one day to see his accusers, and to call them to judgment before the tribunal of the Sovereign Judge of the world. He also accused that assembly of an act of high injustice, in trying him a second time on the same indictment, and declared that he should never acknowledge the authority of the new commissioners, but should look upon them as judges sitting in the chair of *pestilence*. "I came"

said he, "to Constance, to defend John Huss, because I had advised him to go thither, and had promised to come to his assistance, in case he should be oppressed. Nor am I ashamed here to make public confession of my own cowardice. I confess, and tremble while I think of it, that, through fear of punishment by fire, I basely consented, against my conscience, to the condemnation of the doctrines of Wickliffe and Huss."

As soon as he had finished his speech, he was ordered to be carried back to prison, where he was visited by several persons, who endeavored to lead him to abjure the principles which he had so boldly defended : But Jerome steadfastly resisted all their efforts to seduce him to act a second time contrary to the dictates of his conscience.

Jerome was again brought before the Council on the 30th of May, when the Bishop of Lodi preached a sermon from the words : "He upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart." Having first attempted to flatter him, by paying some tribute of praise to his extraordinary abilities, and having extolled the *lenity* and *generosity* with which he had been treat-

ed by the Council, the Bishop exhorted Jerome not to show himself incorrigible. Raising himself on a bench, the prisoner, in an affecting yet firm voice, again declared, "that he had done nothing in his whole life of which he so bitterly repented, as his recantation : that he revoked it from his very soul : that he had been guilty of the meanest falsehood, by making that recantation ; and that he esteemed John Huss a holy man." He declared that he knew no heresy to which Huss was attached, unless they should call by that name his open disapprobation of the vices of the clergy ; and that if, after this declaration, credit should still be given to the false witness borne against him, he should consider the fathers of the Council themselves as unworthy of all belief. "This pious man," added Jerome, alluding to Huss, "could not bear to see the revenues of the Church, which were principally designed for the maintenance of the poor, and for works of liberality, spent in debauchery, feasts, hounds, furniture, gaudy apparel, and other expenses unworthy of Christianity."

The firmness and eloquence of Jerome, sensibly affected the Council ; yet they were deter-

mined to show him no mercy. They urged him once more to retract ; but the martyr fearlessly replied, " Ye have determined to condemn me unjustly ; but after my death I shall leave a sting in your consciences, and a worm that shall not die. I appeal to the Sovereign Judge of all the earth, in whose presence ye must appear to answer me." The Council then pronounced sentence on him, by which he was condemned for having held the errors of Wickliffe, and for having apostatized ; and, after treating him with every insult, in the usual style of Popish affectation they delivered him over to the secular power. The same sort of cap with which Huss had been adorned was put upon his head ; and when thus attired, he was led to execution.

When he arrived at the place appointed for his martyrdom, he could not but smile to see the malice of his enemies appearing in a shape too grotesque for so serious an occasion. The post to which he was to be chained was cut into a monstrous and uncouth figure of Huss, and ornamented in such a manner as to bear a ridiculous resemblance to him. Having kneeled and prayed, he was bound to the stake, upon which

he sung a hymn, which was then much in use in the Church,

“Hail! happy day, and ever be adored,
When hell was conquered by heaven’s great Lord.”

A little before the fire was kindled, he sung the Apostles’ creed: He then told the people that he knew not for what he suffered death, unless it was that he had not subscribed to the condemnation of Wickliffe and Huss, which he could not do with a safe conscience, because he firmly believed them both to be pious men. Fearing that Jerome would see him, the executioner approached the pile to kindle it behind him: on which the martyr said, “Come forward, and put fire to it before my face. Had I feared death, I might have avoided it.” When the wood began to blaze, he sung a hymn, which was soon interrupted by the flames. He continued above a quarter of an hour alive in the midst of the flames, and was distinctly heard to cry, “O Lord God, have mercy on me!—Thou knowest how I have loved thy truth.” The last words which he was heard to utter were,

“This soul in flames, I offer, Christ, to thee!”

The wind having afterwards parted the flames,

his body, covered with blisters, presented a dreadful spectacle to the beholders; yet, even then his lips were seen moving, as if his mind was still actuated by intense devotion.

Thus terminated the life of this eminent servant of Christ, who evidently fell, like Huss, a victim to the cruelty of the Popish Church. In all the proceedings of the Council throughout this melancholy affair, it appears to have been the determination of the majority at least of that assembly, to condemn Jerome to death, whether he could prove his innocence or not. What else could be their intention in trying him a second time, when they had already obtained a triumph over him? "A second trial," says Gilpin, "made that again doubtful, which his recantation had decided in their favor: but it hath been the notorious practice of the Church of Rome, in her dealings with capital offenders, to put them first to shame, and afterwards to death."

The principles of Jerome were the same with those of Huss, and the blamelessness of his life could not be denied by his most determined foes. Whatever were his deficiencies, therefore, in the knowledge of some of the doctrines of the Gos-

pel, it is evident that all his hopes rested on the great atonement made by Christ; while his spirit and constancy in suffering, his dependence on divine grace, his joyful expectation of a blessed resurrection, and his humble confession of sinfulness and unworthiness, plainly mark him as one of the followers of the Lamb.

We shall close this brief memoir with the following extracts from a letter written by Poggius, a Florentine, dated Constance, May 30, 1416, the very day on which Jerome was put to death. This celebrated and ingenuous Papist was present at his trial, condemnation, and execution; and being at the same time an adversary to the cause of Jerome, his testimony to the abilities, fortitude, and eloquence of the martyr, cannot but be read with double interest.

“ Since my return to Constance,” says this writer, “ my attention has been wholly engaged by Jerome, the Bohemian heretic, as he is called. The eloquence and learning which this person has employed in his own defence are so extraordinary, that I cannot forbear giving you a short account of him.

“ To confess the truth, I never knew the art

of speaking carried so near the model of ancient eloquence. It was indeed amazing to hear with what force of expression,—with what fluency of language,—and with what excellent reasoning, he answered his adversaries; nor was I less struck with the gracefulness of his manner, the dignity of his action, and the firmness and constancy of his whole behavior. It grieved me to think so great a man was laboring under so atrocious an accusation. Whether this accusation be a just one, God knows: for myself, I inquire not into the merits of it, resting satisfied with the decision of my superiors.”

Having given a brief account of the first day's trial, together with Jerome's defence, Poggius adds, “This, and much more, he spoke with great elegance of language, in the midst of a very unruly and indecent assembly. It is incredible with what acuteness he answered, and with what amazing dexterity he warded off every stroke of his adversaries. Nothing escaped him: his whole behavior was truly great and pious. If he were indeed the man his defence spoke him, he was so far from meriting death, that, in my judgment, he was not in any degree culpable. In a word, he endeavored to prove,

that the greater part of the charge was purely the invention of his adversaries."

After giving a summary of the noble speech made by Jerome on the 26th, * Poggius farther states, "He took great pains to show that very little credit was due to the witnesses produced against him. He laid open the sources of their hatred to him, and that in a manner which not only shook their credit, but made a strong impression upon the minds of his hearers. The whole Council was moved, and greatly inclined to pity, if not to favor him. It was indeed impossible to hear this pathetic speaker without emotion. Every ear was captivated, and every heart touched. But wishes in his favor were in vain: he threw himself beyond a possibility of mercy. He provoked the vengeance which was hanging over him, by lamenting the cruel and unjust death of that holy man John Huss, and by saying that he was armed with a full resolution to follow the steps of that blessed martyr.

"Throughout his whole oration, he showed a most amazing strength of memory. He had been confined almost a year in a dungeon; the severity of which usage he complained of, but

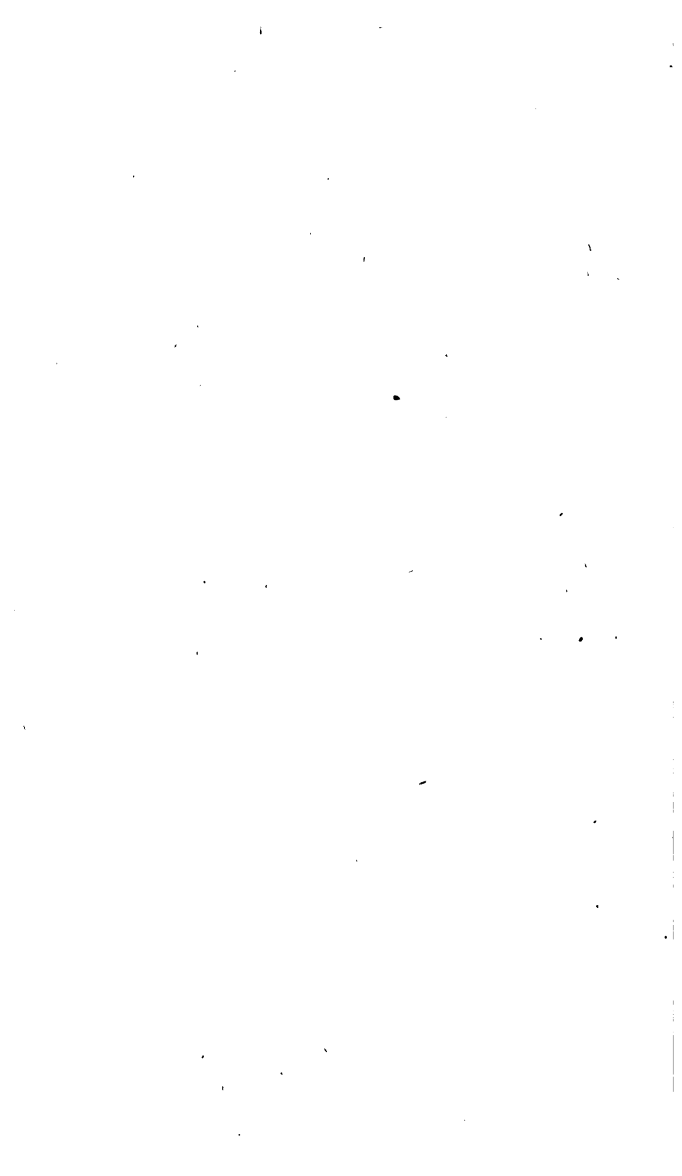
* See pages 155—157.

in the language of a great and good man. In this horrid place he was deprived of his books and papers. Yet, notwithstanding this, and the constant anxiety which must have hung over him, he was no more at a loss for proper authorities and quotations, than if he had spent the intermediate time at leisure in his study.

“ His voice was sweet, distinct, and full, and his action every way proper, either to express indignation or to raise pity ; but he made no affected application to the passions of his audience. Firm and intrepid, he stood before the Council, collected in himself, and not only contemning, but seeming desirous of death. The greatest character in ancient story could not possibly have exceeded him. If there be any justice in history, *this man will be admired by all posterity*. I call him a prodigious man, and the epithet is not extravagant. I was myself an eye-witness of his whole behavior ; and this epistle will, I hope, convince you, that greatness is not wholly confined to antiquity. You will think me perhaps tedious ; but I could have been more prolix on a subject so copious.”

Such is the testimony of this ingenuous Roman Catholic to an adversary. His friend Are-

tin, to whom the letter was written, was much less candid. "You attribute," says he, "to this man more than I could wish. You ought at least to *write* more cautiously of these things!" It has been well observed, that Poggius would probably have written more cautiously, had he written a few days afterwards. But his letter, as formerly stated, is dated on the very day of Jerome's execution. It came warm from the writer's heart, and proves sufficiently what he himself thought of the Council and its proceedings,—his encomium on Jerome being a tacit censure of them.



APPENDIX.

No I.

Wickliffe's Translation of the Bible.—P. 57.

NOTWITHSTANDING the opinion of some writers, that there existed an English translation of the Bible prior to the time of Wickliffe, nothing satisfactory has been adduced by any author to show, that the English Reformer is not entitled to the reputation of being our first translator of the whole Sacred Volume. Many very judicious historians have supposed, that what is called the "Prologue to the Bible," in which the author alludes to a version prior to his own, was the composition of Wickliffe. But it has been proved, to demonstration, by Baber, that this Prologue did not proceed from the pen of Wickliffe, but was written by one of his disciples some time after his decease. This appears evident from the work itself. For example, the author of the Prologue in one place quotes a writer, (Johan Gerson Parisiensis,) whose earliest productions were not penned till some time after Wickliffe's death. In another passage, he refers to a statute which, though first enacted in 1251, had become obsolete till it was revived in 1387, three years after the decease of the English Reformer. And in a third passage of the Prologue, the author, in alluding to the Parliament held in the 18th of Richard II., calls it the *last parliament*, which proves that the work could not have been written previous to 1395, eleven years subsequent to the termination of Wickliffe's life.

The vast undertaking, then, of translating a complete version of the Old and New Testaments into English, was **FIRST** engaged in by Wickliffe; and had this been his only work, it would have been sufficient to immortalize his name. By this means he broke through the gates of darkness, and let in, not a feeble and glimmering ray, but such an effulgence of light as was never afterwards obscured. A spirit of inquiry was excited, and subjects the most interesting to sinful men were, by the light of Divine truth, elicited from the mass of tradition, the perversions of the clergy, and the darkness of an implicit and credulous faith, in which the superstitious and spiritual policy of the middle ages had involved them.

As a specimen of this interesting work, the following extracts from Wickliffe's New Testament are submitted to the perusal of the reader:—

PROLOGUE TO THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW.

Here bigynnoth a newe testament. A PROLOG on matheu.

Matheu that was of iudee as he is sett first in order of gospellers, so he wroot first the gospel in iudee, and fro the office of a tolgaderer he was clepid to god. whanne this matheu hadde prechid first the gospel in iudee and wolde go to hethen men he wroot first the gospel in ebrew, and left it to mynde to christen men of the iewis fro whiche he departide bodili. for as it was nedeful that the gospel were prechid to the confermyng of feith, so it was nedeful that it were writun also aghens eretiks. though manye men han writun the gospel, four oonli, that is matheu, mark, luyk and ioon han the witnessyng of autorite. for thei tellen the feith of the trynnte bi foure partis of the world: and thei ben as foure whelis in the foure horsid carte of the lord that berith him aboute bi prechyng of the gospel: and mankynde that was slayn bi foure deethis schulde be quykened bi the preching of them. and therefore the gospels of othere writeris felden doun and be not resseyued. for the lorde nolde, that the

forseid noumbre were distried for the vertu of sacrament. also the foure gossellers ben undurstondun bi foure figuris of goostli pryuyte. matheu is undurstondun bi man, for he dwellith principali aboute the manheed of crist. mark is undurstondun by a lioun, for he tretith of cristis risyng aghen. luyk is undurstondun bi a calf, and tretith of preesthood. ioon is undurstondun bi an egle and writeth highere the sacramentis *either hooli pryutes* of the godheed. forsothe crist, whom these gossplers discryuen, was a man borun of the virgyn; he was a calf in offrynge *either diyng on the cross*. he was a lioun in risynge aghen. and he was an egle in ascensioun. either the manheed of crist is signyfied in man, presthood is signyfied in the calf, rewme is signyfied in the lioun, and the sacrament of godheed is signyfied in the egle. *that is bi these foure beestis it is declarid, that iesu crist is god & man kyng and preest*

Jerom
in his *twei prologis on matheu seith this. And here bygynneth the gospel of matheu.*

Mat. v. 1.-18.—And Jhesus seyng the peple, went up into an hil; and whanne he was sett, his disciplis camen to him. And he openyde his mouthe, and taughte hem; and seide, Blessid be pore men in spirit; for the kyngdom of hevenes is herun. Blessid ben mylde men: for thei schulen weelde the erthe. Blessid ben thei that mournen: for thei schal be coumfortid. Blessid be thei that hungren and thirsten rigtwisnesse: for thei schal be fulfilled. Blessid ben merciful men: for thei schul gete mercy. Blessid ben thei that ben of clene herte: for thei schulen se god. Blessid ben pesible men: for thei schulen be clepid goddis children. Blessid ben thei that suffren persecucioun for rightwisnesse: for the kyngdom of hevenes is hern. Ye schul be blessid whanne men schul curse you, and schul pursue you: and schul seye al yvel agens you liynge for me. Joie ye and be ye glade: for your meede is plenteous in hevenes: for so thei han pursued also prophetis that weren bifore you. Ye ben salt of the erthe, that if the salt vanishe away wherynne schal it be saltid? to nothing it is worth over, no but it be cast out, and be defoulid of men. Ye ben light of the

world, a citee sett on an hill may not be hid. Ne me teendith not a lanterne and puttith it undir a bushel: but on a candilstik that it give light to alle that ben in the hous. So, schyne your light bifore men, that thei see youre gode workis, and glorifie your fadir that is in hevenes. Nyle ghe deme that I cam to undo the Lawe or the prophetis, I cam not to undo the lawe but to fulfille. Forsothe I sey to you till hevene and erthe passe, oon lettre, or oon title, schal not passe fro the Lawe til alle thingis be don.

Luke xiii. 18—31.—Therefore he seide to what thing is the kyngdom of God lyk? and to what thing schal I gesse it to be lyk? It is lyk to a corn of Seneuey: which a man took and cast into his yerd, and it waxide, and was maad into a great tree: and foulis of the eyr restiden in the braunchis therof. And eft soode he seide, to what thing schal I gesse the kyngdom of God lyk? It is lyk to sourdough that woman took, and hidde it into three mesuris of mele til al were sourid. And he wente by citees and castels, techinge and makinge a Journey into Jerusalem. And a man seide to him, Lord if ther be fewe that ben saued? and he seide to hem. Stryue ye to entre by the streyt gate: for I seye to you, manye seken to entre: and thei schulen not mowe. For whanne the hovsbonde men is entrid and the dore is closid: ye schulen bigynne to stonde without forth and knocke at the dore and he schal answere and seye to you: I knowe not you of whenis ye ben. Than ye schulen bigynne to seye we han etun bifore thee and drunkun: and in oure streetis thou hast taught. And he schal seye to you, I knowe you not of whennes ye ben, goth away from me alle ye worcheris of wickidnesse. There schal be wepinge, and gryntyng of teeth: whanne ye schulen se Abraham & Isaac & Jacob & alle the profetis in the kyngdom of God and you to be putt out. And thei schulen come fro the eest and west and fro the north & south: and schulen sitte at the mete in the rewme of God. And lo thei that weren the firste: ben the laste, and thei that weren the laste: ben the firste.

Acts xxiv.—And aftir fyve daies ananye prince of prestis cam down with summe eldre men, and tertulle a faire speaker which wenten to the president aghens poul. and whanne poul was somened tertulle bigan to accuse hym and seide, whanne in mych pees we doen bi thee and manye thingis ben amendid bi thi wisdom euermore and euery where thou best felix, we han resseyued with al doing of thankings. but lest I tarie thee lenger I preie thee schortli heere us for thi mekenesse. we han foundun this wickid man stiryng dissencioun to alle iewis in the alle world and auctour of dissencioun of the secte of Nazarens. and he also enforside to defoule the temple, whom also we tooken and wolden deme aftir oure lawe. but lisias the tribune cam with greet strengthe aboue and delyueride him fro our hondis and commaundide hise accuseris to come to thee, of whom thou demynge maist knowe of alle these thingis of which we accusen hym; and iewis putten to and seiden, that these thingis hadden hem so. and poul answeride, whanne the president grauntide him to seie, of manye gheeris I knowe thee that thou art domesman to this folk, and I schal do ynowgh for me with good resoun. for thou maist knowe for to me ben not more than twelue daies sithen I cam up to worschipe in ierusalem. and neither in the temple thei founden me disputyng with ony man neither makyng concours of peple, neither in synagogis, neither in citee, neither thei moun preue to thee of the whiche thingis thei now accusen me. but I knowleche to thee this thing, that aftir the secte which thei seien eresie so I serue to god the fadir. and I bileeue to alle thingis that ben writun in the lawe and prophetis. and I haue hope in god which also thei hemsilff abiden the aghenrisyng to comynge of iuste men and wickide. In this thing I studie without hirting to have conscience to god and to men evermore. but aftir manye gheeris I cam to do almesdedis to my folk, and offringis and avowis, in whiche thei founden me purified in the temple, not with cumpanye neither with noise. and thei caughten me and thei crieden and seiden, take awei oure enemye. & summe iewis of asie which it bihoste to be now present at thee and accuse if thei had-

den ony thing aghens me. either these hemself seie if thei foundon in me ony thing of wickidnesse sithen I stonde in the counseil, but oonli of this voice, bi which I criede stondynge among hem, for of the aghenrisynge of deede men I am demed this dai of ghou. sotheli felix dilaiede hem, and knew moost certeynli of the weie, & seide, whanne lisias the tribune schal come down I schal heere ghou. and he commaundide to a centurien to kepe hym, and that he hadde rest, and neither to forbede ony man to mynystre of hise owne thingis to hym. and aftr summe daies felix cam down with drusyille his wyf that was a iewesse, and clepide poul and herde of him the feith that is in crist ihesu. and while he disputide of rightwisnesse & chastite and of doom to comynge felix was maad tremblynge and answeride, whidir perteyneth now go, but in tyme couenable I schal clepe thee. also he hopide that money schulde be ghovun to him of poul, for which thinge ofte he clepide him & spak with hym. and whanne twei gheeris weren fillid felix took a successour porcius festus, and felix wolde give grace to iewis, and left poul boundun.

Rom. viii. 26-39.—And also the spyryt helpith oure ynfyrmite, for what we schulen preie as it bihoueth we witen not, but thilk spyryt axith for us with sorowynge that moun not be toold out. for he that sekith the hertis woot what the spyrit desyreth, for bi god he axith for hooli men. and we witen, that to men that louen god alle thingis worchen togidre into good to hem that aftr purpos ben clepid seyntis. for thilk that he knew bifore he bifore ordeynede bi grace to be maad lyk to the ymage of his sone, that he be the firste bigeten among manye britheren. and thilke that he bifore ordeynede to blisse hem he clepide, and whiche he clepide hem he iustifiede, and whiche he iustifiede, and hem he glorifiede. what thanne schulen we seie to these thingis? if god for us who is aghens us? the which also sparide not his owne sone but for us alle bitook him, hou also ghaf he not to us alle thingis with him? who schal accuse aghens the chosen men of god? it is god that iustifieth. who is it that condempneth? it is iesus crist that was deed, ghe

the which roos aghea, which is on the right half of god, and the which preieth for us. who thanne schal departe us fro the charite of crist? tribulacioun or angwisch, or hungir or nakidnesse or persecucioun or peril or swerd? as it is writun, for we ben slayn al dai for thee, we ben gessid as scheep of slaughtir. but in alle these thingis we ouercomen for hym that louyde us. but I am certeyn that neithir deeth, neithir lyf, neithir aungelis, neithir principatis, neithir vertues, neithir present thingis, neithir thingis to comynge, neithir strengthe, neithir highthe, neithir depnesse, neithir noon othir creature mai departe us fro the charite of god that is in iesu crist oure lord.

Rev. iv.—Aftir these thingis I saigh and lo a dore was opened in heuene, and the first vois that I herde was of a trumpe spekyng with me. and seide, stie thou up hidir, and I schal schewe to thee whiche thingis it bihoueth to be don soone aftir these thingis. anon I was in spirit, and lo a seete was sette in heuene, and upon the seete oon sittynge, and he that saat was lyk the sigt of a stoon iaspis and to sardyn, and a reynebowe was in cumpas of the seete lyk the sigt of smaragdyn. and in the cumpas of the seete weren xxiii smale seetis, and aboue the trones foure and twenti eldri men sittynge hiled aboute with white cloothis, and in the heedis of hem goldun crownes. and leitis and voices and thundryngis came out of the trone, and seuene laumpis brennyng bifore the trone, whiche ben the vij spirits of god. and bifore the seete as a see of glas lyk a cristal, and in the myddil of the seete, and in the cumpas of the seete foure beestis ful of ighen bifore and bihynde. and the firste beeste lyk a lioun, and the secounde beeste lyk a calf, and the thridde beeste hauynge a face as of man, and the fourthe beeste lyk an egle fleyng. and the foure beestis hadden euery of hem sixe wyngis, and al aboute and withynne thei weren ful of ighen. and thei hadden not reeste dai and nyght, seiynge, hooli, hooli, hooli, the lord god almyghti that was and that is, and that is to comynge. and whanne the foure beestis gaven glorie and onour and blessing to hym that saat on the trone that lyueth into worldis of worldis, the foure and twenti eldre men felden down bifore

him that saat on the trone, and worschipiden him that liueth into worldis of worldis, and thei casten her crownys bifore the trone and seiden, thou lord oure god art worthi to take glorie and onour and vertue, for thou madist of nought alle thingis, and for thi wille tho weren and ben maad of nought.

No. II.

Address of the Emperor to the Council of Constance, relative to the condemnation of Huss.
p. 117.

THE following address of the Emperor, which is given by L'Enfant, clearly shows the determination of that prince, notwithstanding all his promises, to join with the Council in putting Huss to death; and lays open the true reason of that treatment which the Reformer was to have experienced in the event of his having retracted.

“ You have heard the articles laid to the charge of John Huss. They are grievous, numerous, and proved not only by credible witnesses, but by his own confession. In my opinion, there is not a single one among them which does not call for the punishment of fire. If, therefore, he do not retract all, I am for having him burnt. And even though he should obey the Council, I am of opinion, that he should be forbid to preach and instruct, or ever to set foot again in the kingdom of Bohemia. For if he be suffered to preach, and especially in Bohemia, where he has a strong party, he will not fail to return to his natural bent, and even to sow new errors worse than the former. Moreover, I am of opinion, that the condemnation of his errors in Bohemia ought to be sent to my brother the King of Bohemia, to Poland, and to other countries where this doctrine prevails, with orders to cause all those who shall continue to believe and teach it, to be punished by the ecclesiastical authority and by the secular arm jointly. There is no remedy for this evil, but by thus cutting

the branches as well as pulling up the root. Moreover, it is absolutely necessary that the bishops and other prelates, who have labored here for the extirpation of heresy, be recommended by the suffrages of the whole Council to their sovereigns. Lastly, if there are any of John Huss's friends here at Constance, they ought to be restrained with all due severity, but especially his disciple Jerome."

No. III.

Injustice of the Council of Constance in their treatment of Huss and Jerome.

ECCLESIASTICAL historians in general, have endeavored to find out the reasons which influenced the Council in their condemnation of the two Bohemian Reformers. After much investigation, however, they have almost uniformly come to the conclusion, that these two men fell victims to the rage and injustice of their unrelenting enemies. "And indeed this conclusion," says Mosheim, "is both natural and well-grounded; nor will it be difficult to show how it came to pass, that the reverend Fathers of the Council of Constance were so eagerly bent upon burning as a heretic, a man (namely Huss,) who neither deserved such an injurious title, nor such a dreadful fate."

Having stated three circumstances which weighed against the Reformers, namely,—that Huss had excited great commotions in Bohemia, both by his discourse and by his writings, and had rendered the clergy of all ranks and orders extremely odious in the eyes of the people,—that there were many great men in the Council who looked upon themselves as personally offended by Huss, on account of the dispute between the *nominalists* and *realists**—and that both Reformers showed their aversion to

* See page 87.

the Germans, for their presumption and despotism ; Mosheim adds, " these circumstances, as contributing to the fate of this good, man (John Huss,) are all drawn from the resentment and prejudices of his enemies, and have not the least color of equity." The same author, however, immediately proceeds to show, that there did appear in the conduct of Huss *one mark of heresy* ; but in pointing out that mark, he uses language which, from first to last, evidently appears to bear upon it the stamp of irony. " It must be confessed," says he, " that there appeared one mark of heresy in the conduct of this Reformer, which, according to the notions that prevailed in this century, might expose him to condemnation with some shadow of reason and justice ; *I mean, his inflexible obstinacy*, which the church of Rome always considered as a *grievous heresy*, even in those whose errors were of little moment. We must consider this man as called before a Council, which was supposed to represent the Universal Church, to confess his faults and abjure his errors. This he obstinately refused to do, unless he was previously convicted of error ; here, therefore, he resisted the authority of the *Catholic Church*, demanded a rational proof of the justice of the sentence it had pronounced against him, and intimated, with sufficient plainness, that he looked upon the Church as *fallible*. *All this certainly was most enormously criminal and intolerably heretical*. For it became a dutiful son of the Church to renounce his eye-sight, and to submit both his judgment and his will, without any exception or reservation, to the judgment and will of that holy mother, under a firm belief and entire persuasion of the infallibility of all her decisions. This ghostly mother had, for many ages past, followed, whenever her unerring perfection and authority were called in question, the rule which Pliny observed in his conduct towards the Christians. 'When they persevered,' says he, in his letter to Trajan, 'I put my threats into execution, from a persuasion, that whatever their confession might be, their audacious and invincible obstinacy deserved an exemplary punishment.' "

L' Enfant, in his History of the Council of Constance,

after carefully reviewing all the circumstances relative to the sentence pronounced on Huss and Jerome, is not only decidedly of opinion that the accusers failed in making out their charges, and consequently that so severe and cruel a sentence was unjust; but he passes the following remarkable encomium on the private letters of Huss: "There is not a Papist nor a Protestant, I will venture to say, not a Turk nor a Pagan, who, notwithstanding the hasty expressions dropped now and then in his letters, does not admire them for the dignity and piety of his sentiments, the tenderness of his conscience, his charity towards his enemies, his affection and fidelity to his friends, his gratitude to his benefactors, and above all, his constancy of mind, accompanied with the most extraordinary modesty and humility."

THE END.

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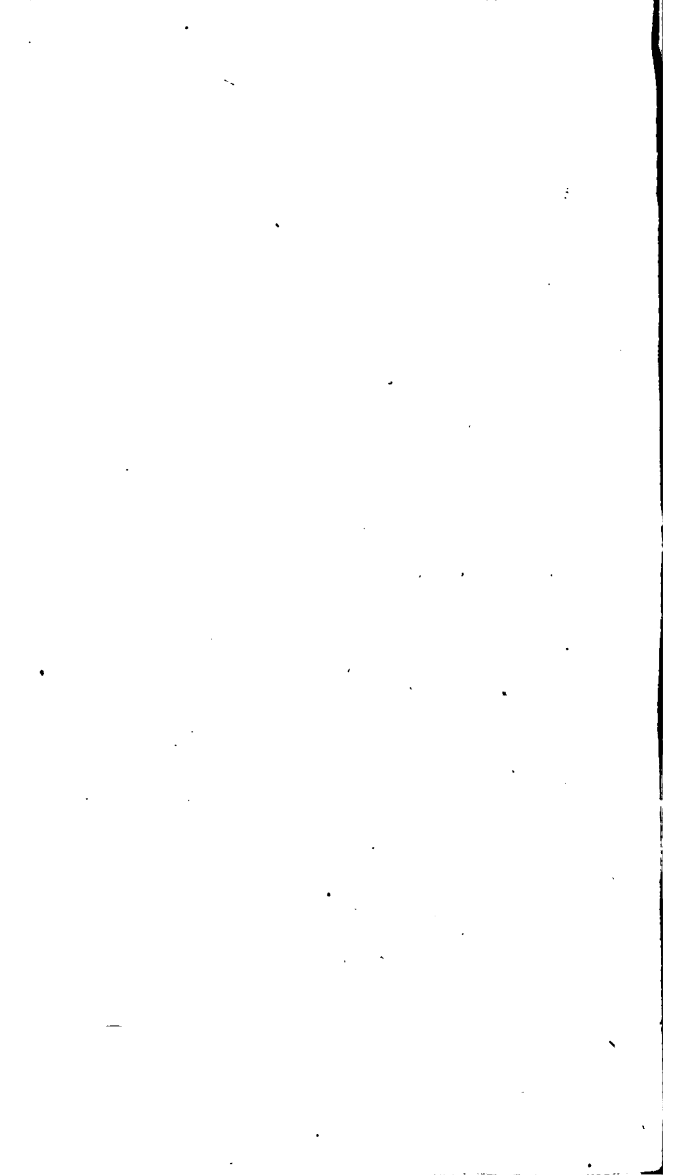


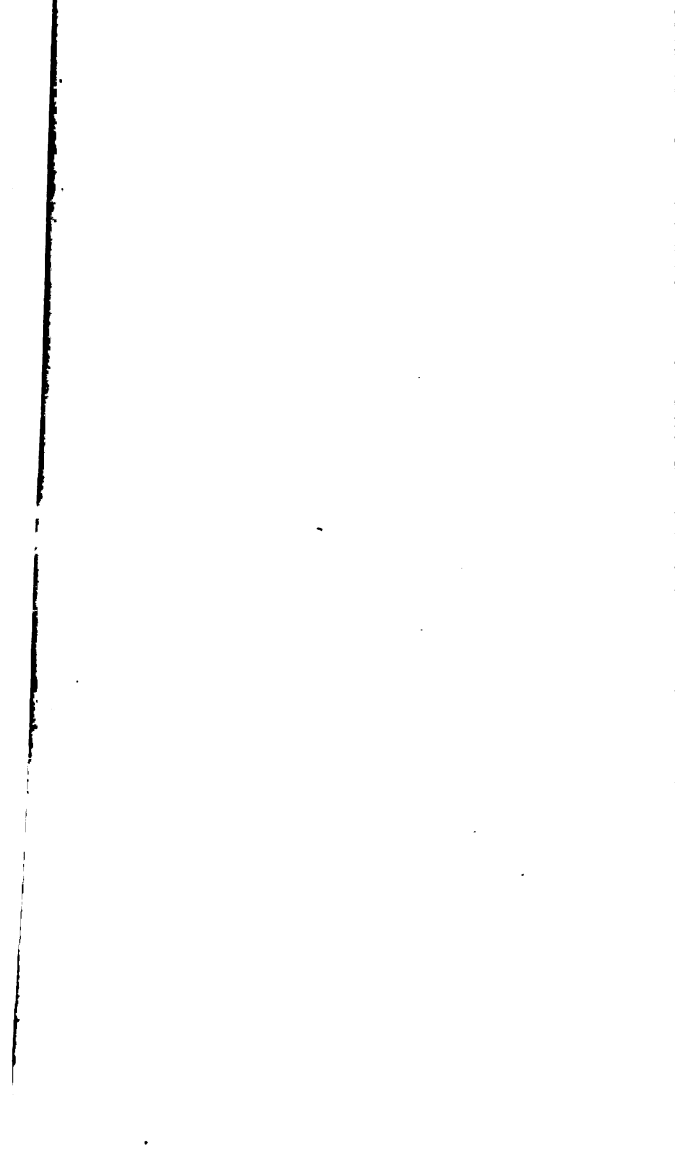
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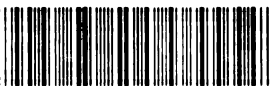
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